THE BUSY-BODIES.

THE BUSY-BODIES;

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHORS OF "THE ODD VOLUME."

"TAK IT AMANG YE," SAID JENNY DENNISON.

Tales of my Landlord.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE

BUSY-BODIES.

CHAPTER I.

Sold. News! news!
Tamb. Now, now! What's the matter?

MARLOWE.

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Much Ado about Nothing.

WHO can doubt that early next morning Miss Kennedy found leisure to call on her friend Miss Macdonald, with whom, to the exclusion of all other visitors, she remained shut up for at least two hours? The particulars of their conference have not been communicated; but while Miss Macdonald

accompanied Miss Kennedy to the front door, the latter was heard to say, "Remember you have it in strict confidence;" to which the other responded, "You may depend upon my secrecy."

No sooner was Miss Kennedy shut out, than a portentous peal summoned Betty into the presence of her mistress. "Fly instantly, Betty, with my compliments to Miss Mackinlay, and say, if she is disengaged this evening, I will have the pleasure of drinking tea with her.—Stay," as Betty moved towards the door—"should Miss Mackinlay be engaged, go to Mrs Smellarat; and if Mrs Smellarat can't receive me, go to Miss Jenny Nettles.—Surely," she continued as the servant left the room, "they cannot all be engaged—I think I will surprise some of them. I only hope Miss Kennedy has not been with them already—'tis strange she can keep nothing to herself. I doubt if she has been telling the truth, 'tis so highly improbable that people in their senses should choose to amuse them-

selves in such a way. Wild beasts! I can't believe it; but to be sure the story will just repeat as well as if every word of it were true. But what can keep Betty? She stays her messages dreadfully—and must get a hint about it." Betty at length made her appearance.

"Come away, Betty; what has kept you so long? you might have been a hundred messages, by the time you have taken. But what does Miss Mackinlay say—can she receive me?"

"I am sure, ma'am," replied Betty, a little nettled at the reproof, particularly as she deserved it—"I am sure, ma'am, I ran every foot of the way, but Mrs Smellarat keepit me a dreadful time before she could make up her mind whether or no she would accept of your visit."

"Don't tell me any such nonsense—I dare say you were clattering with her servants in the kitchen—But did you not go first to Miss Mackinlay's?"

"Yes," replied Betty, in no very respect-

ful tone, "but she sends her compliments, and is very sorry that, as she expects some friends frae Edinburgh to dinner, she canna ha'e the pleasure of seeing you to your tea; but Mrs Smellarat, after keeping me waiting never sae lang, sent down word that she would be glad to see you."

"Very well, you may go down stairs:" and as Betty sulkily withdrew, her mistress muttered to herself—"Not receive me, because she expected visitors from Edinburgh? I think she might have been glad of me to assist her to entertain them. She is so stupid, that she would be much the better of a lively, pleasant woman, who would make her party go off well.

"I wonder who they can be—she does not give many dinners—I wish I had gone myself, in place of sending that stupid Betty; but I dare say it is only her brother,—she takes good care to keep him all to herself: I have observed that she never asks any of her acquaintances to the house when he is down. She need not be afraid," con-

tinued the offended lady, with a toss of her head, "I am sure I see nothing so very attractive about him."

While Miss Macdonald was giving vent to her spleen in the drawing-room, Betty was equally busy in the kitchen.

"Does she think," said the indignant Betty to the washerwoman, "that folk hae four pair o' legs, snubbing a body at that rate?—She likes weel a chat wi' her ain cronies, and does she no think that we ha'e our clatters as weel as the gentry? I am sure I wasna aboon a quarter o' an hour at Miss Mackinlay's, and just as I was coming away, Mr Mackinlay's man, Will, came in, and ye ken I couldna rin away before I had spoken a word or twa wi' such an auld acquaintance,—so, ye see, the time just gaed by without my noticing; but when Miss Mackinlay rung the bell for Jenny, I came away, and Will said he would gang wi' me to Mrs Smellarat's. Kate Macfarlane's aye there yet, and Will is unco ta'en up wi' her—I wonder what he sees in her;—but, ony way, I

left him there; for I kent if I stayed another minute, there would be a fine rippet when I came hame. I think she would like weel to gang to Miss Mackinlay's the night; but for a' they are such cronies, I dinna think she wants her; and Will tell't me his master didna like her; for he minds ae day when they saw her coming to call, he heard Mr Mackinlay say to his sister, 'What does that troublesome old woman mean by coming here so often?' and that he shut himself up in his own room till she went away."

Betty's remarks were here interrupted by the sound of the drawing-room bell. "What the deil can she want now? I'm sure I mended the fire just before I gaed out." Another peal was rung, and Betty trudged up stairs.

"Betty," said Miss Macdonald, "did you hear what visitors Miss Mackinlay expects from Edinburgh?—perhaps it may be Mr Mackinlay, as he generally pays his sister a visit about this time."

"I never asked," replied Betty.

Having no farther information to give, Betty was dismissed; and Miss Macdonald having equipped herself in her pelisse and bonnet, prepared to set out on a voyage of discovery, not doubting, that before her return, she would be mistress of Miss Mackinlay's most secret movements.

"I guessed what she wanted," said Betty, on her return to the lower regions; "she would fain ken wha is to be at Miss Mackinlay's; but catch me telling her, after her girning at me about staying my errands. I tell't her I ne'er asked wha was to be there,—and neither I did,—but Will tell't me; but I wasna obliged to say that."

Declining for the present to trace Miss Macdonald's motions, we shall now inquire how our fair friends in Hope Street are occupied.

"Catherine, Catherine," exclaimed Ellinor, "do come to the window and tell me who are those sitting on the wall down there. I know that is Willoughby on the left, and Brooke beside him; but who is the other? I think, too, I should know

him.—Oh, I remember! That is he who cut such extravagant capers on the Edinburgh road, to attract our notice,—he is a good-looking young man. Come, let us get our bonnets, and take a stroll on the sands."

"I think," replied Catherine, "that we had better not go just now. They must have seen us at the window, and as they are aware that we do not generally go out so early, I fear they will imagine we go now on purpose to meet them; and I am not at all disposed to pay them that compliment."

"Oh, nonsense,—you are always so fastidious. I would go out just to show them that they are not of consequence enough to influence our motions, or keep us within doors when we wish to walk. A pretty idea truly, that we are to be prisoners this fine morning, because, forsooth, they choose to sit on the Bath wall! I am determined to show the whole party that they are not to regulate my movements."

"Do be persuaded, my dear Ellinor: I

saw Willoughby looking up, and he will think our conduct so strange."

"Let him look, I don't care; and it is a matter of great indifference to me what he thinks. You are making them of too much consequence. Dismiss all this nonsense, and get your bonnet, for out I am determined to go.—But who can that be at the door? Do call to William, 'Not at home.' I dare say it is that disagreeable Miss Kennedy; no fashionable person would call at this plebeian hour."

"We had better be at home, it looks so strange to be always denied; and it is so early, the visitors will hardly believe that we are out."

"No, no. But I must run and tell William, or the stupid fellow will let them in.—William," she called from the stair, "Not at home."

And having settled this point, she returned to the drawing-room, and was just approaching the window, when Catherine

drew her back. "Do not go so near, you will be seen."

"Oh, I forgot that; but I dare say it is nobody of any consequence."

At this moment William entered with a card, which he gave to Ellinor, who hardly allowed him to get out of the room before she exclaimed, dashing it down, "Was ever anything so provoking! What could possess the man to call at this early hour? It was like that blockhead's usual stupidity not to admit him."

"What card is that which has occasioned so much displeasure?"

"It is Spencer's," replied Ellinor. "I wish I had taken your advice, and had not denied myself."

"I am heartily glad at your disappointment," said Catherine, laughing. "This little incident will make a greater impression than twenty of my lectures. You would have been rewarded for doing right, and at the very moment when you were

exercising your self-denial; of course you will not think of going out now?"

"And why not?" said Ellinor, going towards the window. "Should we meet them, will not that be proof positive that we were out when he called? But there he is—he has joined the party on the wall. Let us make haste."

"It is quite impossible; they see the house-door from where they have stationed themselves; indeed you must not think of such a plan."

"I not only think of it, but I am determined to put it into execution directly. If they see us come from the house, and join us, we can easily say it was all a mistake of William's. I dare say they have heard of such things before."

"Indeed, Ellinor, I cannot go; and depend upon it the gentlemen will think the more of us for our refraining to administer to their vanity in that open manner."

"Well," said Ellinor, pettishly, "you may do as you please; but I am going, and

if they join me, and we should happen to meet that gossip Miss Kennedy, she will make a fine story of Miss Lennox walking on the sands with half-a-dozen dragoons; but if you will not give me the advantage of your grave presence, I shall go without it."

Catherine, seeing that Ellinor would take her own way, agreed, but most unwillingly, to accompany her; and after dressing for her walk, she was waiting in the drawing-room for her cousin, when she and Lady Lennox entered the room almost at the same moment.

"Come away, Catherine," said Ellinor; "I have been longer at my toilette than I intended, but do not let us lose any more time."

"Where are you going?" asked Lady Lennox. "If it is only to take a walk, I must detain you a little. I want Catherine to look over this letter, to see if the punctuation is right. It is to Miss Hume, and she is so very particular, that I am

anxious my letter should be properly pointed. Look, Catherine, don't you think there should be a comma here, and a semicolon after this word?"

"Oh, mamma," said Ellinor, who was impatient to get out before the officers should decamp, "what does it signify whether you put a comma or a colon? I assure you it is quite unfashionable and pedantic to point a letter correctly. Ladies never, by any chance, do such a thing. Besides, we are in a great hurry to get out; so I beg you will not detain us any longer; but if you must have stops, can't you wait till we return from our walk?"

"That will be a great deal too late, as I wish my letter to go by the two-o'clock post. I wonder why you are in such haste to-day; you do not in general go out so early."

"But," replied Ellinor, "we have some shopping before we walk, and Campbell can't get my ruff finished till I bring her the ribbons."

"Oh, you are going to Walker's, are you? Then, Catherine, I shall tell you what I wish you to buy for me there; for, as to Ellinor, she regularly forgets all my commissions. But first finish the punctuation."

"Indeed, mamma, we can't wait just now for your commissions, but we will return for them in a few minutes; and as to the punctuation, I would advise you to send the writing in one sheet, and the points in another, and Miss Hume will have them entirely at her own disposal, which will save you a world of trouble."

"How can you talk such nonsense?" said Lady Lennox, in high indignation that her effusions should be treated so cavalierly; "let your cousin alone till she has finished what she is about."

But Ellinor was too little accustomed to consult the comfort or convenience of others, to attend to her ladyship's order. So in a few moments she was once more tormenting Catherine. "Do be quick. I am sure

you need not be so very particular. Oh, it will do now—come away."

The great business of the commas and colons being completed, Catherine returned the letter to Lady Lennox, and was following Ellinor, who had already descended the stairs, when her ladyship called her back. "As you are going to Walker's, you may get me four yards of scarlet binding—no, I dare say I shall require four yards and a half, and two pieces of tape."

"Catherine, Catherine," resounded from below, "are these horrid points not settled yet?"

"Coming directly, cousin."

"Did you ever know such an impatient girl?" said her ladyship—"so like her father. But where was I? I believe I mentioned the binding and tape. I want also six yards of pale-blue ribbon. Be sure that you get it of a clear shade; I hate your muddy blues. Get a paper of the best pins, and three skeins of black silk thread. I

want some needles, too. Would you advise me to get gold or silver eyes?"

"Catherine, if you don't come instantly, I shall go without you."

"Is there any particular reason for all this haste?" asked her ladyship. "Ellinor did not use to be so fond of shopping; indeed, I think she allows Campbell to purchase too many of her things. It is not right to put temptation in her way; not but that I think Campbell quite as honest as other servants, but the best of them require to be looked after."

"Catherine!" again screamed Ellinor, "will you never have done? you might have pointed ten letters by this time."

"Go to that bawling girl," said her ladyship. "I would rather want my needles, than have such a noise in the house."

Catherine obeyed, and joined her cousin.

"I thought," said the latter, "that you never would come,—'tis so teasing in mamma to plague us with her points just now; and I dare say, we shall have no amuse-

ment, for I think they have all taken flight."

"You know, Ellinor, I could not come till I had done what my aunt wished. We cannot always please ourselves; think what a world it would be, if we consulted our own comfort only, without attending to the wishes of our friends?"

"Oh, now, no lecture; it is quite enough to be kept waiting an hour, and to be put out of humour, without having a sermon into the bargain."

"But it is your fault, that you allow yourself to be put out of humour, by such a trifle; besides, you exaggerate the time you were kept waiting. I am sure you were not detained above a quarter of an hour."

"Well, well, an hour or a quarter of an hour, it is all the same; I know it was quite long enough.—But do not let us quarrel about it."

They proceeded in silence, till they reached the foot of the street. Catherine, who

was anxious that her cousin should regain her good humour before they met any of their military friends, ventured a remark, and Ellinor was just beginning to come round, when they arrived on the sands. The sunshine quickly overcast, not a red-coat was to be seen, " nothing but dreary land and sky." The whole party had vanished.

" I thought how it would be," said Ellinor, her pouts returning; " I wish I had come without you. This comes of waiting for other people; and then mamma with her points! her letter might have gone just as well by the evening post. But some cross accident always happens when we have any amusement in view; I never knew it fail."

" I dare say," replied Catherine, smiling, " had your mamma known that you were going in chase of half-a-dozen dragoons, she would not have detained you a moment; but you see, my dear cousin, that we never deviate from the right path without being punished for it."

" I don't know what you call the right

path. I am sure there is no such mighty sin in taking a walk on the sands, even though there *were* some officers there. I only wish that those who make such a fuss about it, may never do worse."

Catherine was silent. At this moment, to the great annoyance of Ellinor, they were joined by Miss Kennedy, her niece and nephew. Ellinor, who was mentally wishing them all at the bottom of the sea, listened with such a gloomy air to Mr Stevens's fine compliment, that Catherine had great difficulty in restraining herself from laughing; and Mr Stevens thought that a severe headach must be the occasion of her knit brows and short replies.

" I fear, Miss," he began, " that your head must be very bad, or perhaps it is a heart-ach ; a pretty Miss like you must often have these sort of plagues."

" There are many other plagues, sir, much more insufferable than either headachs or heart-achs," replied the haughty

beauty, surveying him from head to foot, with an air of fashionable insolence.

Mr Stevens paused a moment, to endeavour to take in the sense of her words; but as self-love prevented him from comprehending her inuendo, he resumed—"As you very sensibly remark, Miss, we have a great many plagues in this world; but we should just try and make the best of them, and, as the old saying, 'lay the head of the sow to the tail of the grice.'"

"How dare you, sir, speak to me of your vulgar proverbs? Is this, sir, conversation for a lady?—Catherine, I have got a headach—I wish to go home."

Catherine, thus summoned, quitted Miss Kennedy and Miss Stevens, with whom she was walking, and returned with Ellinor. When they reached Hope Street, Catherine said, "Won't you go with me to Walker's? I have some commissions to execute for Lady Lennox, and besides, it is too soon to go in. Come now," continued she playfully, taking hold of her arm, "you must

oblige me—you would not let me walk through the village alone?" But Ellinor was too much petted to be induced to oblige any one; and telling Catherine she had no turn for pin-and-needle duties, she walked sulkily into the house, and Catherine pursued her way. Just as she reached the head of Hope Street, she saw Willoughby and Brooke advancing from the east. She determined to bow and pass on, but the gentlemen, either not seeing, or not choosing to see, that such was her intention, joined her, and on inquiring her destination, insisted on being allowed to select herneedles. Catherine allowed Willoughby to choose the pink ribbon for Ellinor, (but without telling him who it was for,) hoping this would assist in restoring the good-humour of her wayward cousin. The gentlemen seemed very much inclined to prolong her stay in the shop; but Catherine would not be detained, and after completing her various purchases, she retraced her steps, accompanied by the gentlemen.

Willoughby made many inquiries as to their motions,—said they intended to call, but had been prevented by seeing Spencer's ill-fortune; found there was no hope for them; wondered where the ladies had hid themselves all the morning, for they had been on, or at least near the sands, till within a quarter of an hour, and had not been so fortunate as to see them. To all these hints Catherine replied in the most general terms; and although they accompanied her to the door, and rung the bell for her, she did not invite them in, not knowing in what kind of humour she might find Ellinor and the rest of the family. On arriving in the drawing-room, she found Ellinor lolling on the sofa in total idleness, and Lady Lennox busy clearing her writing-desk of rubbish, which, to say the truth, was all that it generally contained.

"Well, Ellinor," said Catherine smiling, and holding up before her the pink ribbon, "who do you think chose this ribbon? Come, I will give you three guesses."

"Did you buy my needles, Catherine?" asked her ladyship. "I hope they are not coarse: the last Campbell bought me were more like spits than needles."

"I never can guess," said Ellinor, in tolerably good humour; "so you may just as well tell me."

"What would you think if it were Mr Stevens?—the delicate pink is so like his taste."

"Do not mention the vulgar wretch; but seriously, who chose it?"

"Who, but the irresistible Willoughby!"

"Willoughby! I can't believe you," said Ellinor, starting up from her indolent posture; "where did you meet with him?"

"In the village; you see what you have missed by remaining stupidly at home."

"Was he alone?"

"No; Brooke was with him. They accompanied me to the door, and said they meant to have called this forenoon, but on seeing Spencer denied admittance, they

went away in despair. This will surely cure you of making poor William tell so many fibs."

"Don't tease me;—but how could you avoid asking them in, after such a broad hint?"

"By simply bidding them good morning at the door."

"That was very rude and absurd. If I had been there, I should certainly have desired them to make out their visit."

"I think," said Lady Lennox, "that Catherine showed her sense in not inviting them in, so near our dinner-hour. I declare, when once these officers get into the house, there is no getting them out of it. The very last time Captain Spencer was here, he sat so long, I was absolutely quite faint from hunger, before dinner was put on the table. They keep very late hours at the barracks, to be sure, but they ought not to suppose other people equally foolish. And they not only stay late, but they come sometimes so early, that they prevent the

servants from rubbing the drawing-room furniture properly. Mary had her brushes in her hand for two hours the other day, expecting every moment to hear the bell ring to let them out; really, these long calls are a dreadful waste of time. But bless me, here is a terrible stain on the table; I must have Mary in here while we are at dinner."

"I am sure," said Ellinor, alarmed lest a stop should be put to the visits of her admirers, "I am sure, I see nothing the matter with the tables; for my part, I see no use in working poor Mary to death in polishing the furniture of other people; but if she must be employed, you had better make her rub papa's book-case."

As the said book-case stood in the dressing-room of Sir Thomas, Ellinor was very strenuous in recommending Mary to exercise herself there, as she was not at all disposed to be rubbed out of the admiration of Willoughby and Spencer. Being now in pretty good humour, she sat down to the harp, and

sung, for at least the ninety-ninth time, " Forget-me-not." Catherine retired to take off her bonnet, and Lady Lennox persevered in her laudable endeavours to reduce to order the chaos of her writing-desk, which task she happily accomplished just as the last dish was placed on the dinner table.

CHAPTER II.

A feast must be without a fault ;
And if 'tis not all right, 'tis naught.
Art of Cookery.

It will readily be believed, that our military friends did not fail to profit by their introduction to the Lennox family, to whom they became so agreeable, that it was resolved *nem. con.* to invite them to a dinner party.

"Who shall we get to meet those officers ?" said Sir Thomas, as the family were assembled. "I think we may ask the Ramsays, and we had better have the Balfours, as we owe them a dinner."

"Indeed, we owe the Balfours no such thing," said her ladyship, "they were last

with us, and though they have had several parties of late, they did not even invite any of the young people !"

"And," said Ellinor, "Louisa Balfour is a forward minx, always pushing herself into notice."

"And I," said Charles, by way of increasing the confusion, "think the brother an insufferable puppy; I never could be troubled with him."

"I wonder," rejoined the Baronet, "that you too, Catherine, have not some objections to these said Balfours; they seem at least to have incurred the dislike of the rest of the family?"

"I never liked any of them," said Catherine, with great composure.

"Well, well," resumed Sir Thomas, "we must take people in this world as we find them: the Balfours, probably, have their faults like other people; but I don't know whom we could get in their place, most of our friends being at present in the country; and Mr Balfour is a very well-informed man,

and has much the manner of a gentleman; so see that a card is sent to those Balfours this very day."

"It is more than they deserve," muttered her ladyship.

"I am sure, I shan't write it," said Ellinor.

"I fear, I shall be jealous of the son," said Charles, in a low voice to Catherine.

"And pray, what fault," asked Sir Thomas, "have you to find to the Ramsays, for I don't suppose they have the supreme felicity to meet with the approbation of all my family?"

"I think, I have heard you say a hundred times," said Ellinor, pertly, "that you could not endure old Ramsay, he is such a notorious whig."

Sir Thomas was not prepared for this home-thrust, and found it expedient to fill his glass. "Well," he replied, "though I might say, as I dare say I have done, that Mr Ramsay is a whig, that does not mean he is either vulgar or ignorant; and Miss

Ellinor, you ought to know that when I speak so, it is not the man I dislike, but his political principles. These are figures of speech which we make use of when discussing political subjects; besides, a fair opposition is the great bulwark of our liberties, and I should be very sorry to see it abolished. Every man is entitled to have an opinion of his own; it would be hard, indeed, were we all obliged to think alike."

"It is hard, I think," Ellinor replied, "that you will only allow people to have an opinion of their own in politics; I don't see why it should be confined to that subject. But it is generally the case that those who make such a noise about liberty of opinion, reign supreme in their own families."

"Women should not meddle," said the posed Sir Thomas, "with what they know nothing about."

"That applies equally to men," replied Ellinor; "we will leave you to manage politics, and you should leave to us, the arrangement of our household concerns."

"And prettily arranged they would be, were they intrusted to such a head-piece," rejoined Sir Thomas. "Who could have imagined," he continued, "that my proposal of inviting a friend to dinner would have caused such a riot!"

Catherine now observing that Sir Thomas was becoming warm, motioned her ladyship to rise, and leaving the Baronet to meditate on Whig and Tory, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room.

"I am sure," said Lady Lennox, as soon as they got up stairs, "I hope these odious Balfours will be engaged; I never liked them, and Mrs Balfour is so ill-natured. But who is to write the card, for Sir Thomas won't enjoy a moment's peace until it is sent off?"

"If he waits till I write it," said Ellinor, "he will wait some time."

"You know, Ellinor," said her ladyship, "that the card must be written, so you may just as well do it, without saying any more about the matter."

"Give me the key of your desk, Ellinor," said Catherine, "and I will be your amanuensis; perhaps they may be engaged."

"I will take any bet," said Ellinor, while giving her the key, "they will all accept; did you ever know us get refusals when we asked them? Oh, no, that would be too much happiness."

"You have no paper, Ellinor," said Catherine, "and what has become of all your pens?"

"Pull out the drawer, and you will find some; I left a pen there this morning. What need you be so particular to them?"

"Indeed, you must come and find the paper yourself, for I see nothing but half-torn letters. Your desk is in odious disorder; I wonder you can allow it to remain in a state of such confusion."

"Oh, I meant to have cleared it yesterday, but had not time. But surely there is at least half-a-sheet of paper in it?"

"Not a single scrap can I see."

"You are right, I used the last sheet this morning."

The card was at last dispatched, and in due time an answer returned.

"Give me the note," said Ellinor, as soon as it appeared. "I thought so!" she exclaimed, tossing it to Catherine: "Will do themselves the pleasure,—it is more than they will do us; I only pray old Balfour may have a glorious fit of the gout."

"That would do you no good," said Charles, "as it would be his wife only whom it would keep at home; your friend Miss Louisa would still be of the party."

"If Mrs Balfour," said her ladyship, "would only stay away, I should not care about the young people; but," continued she, "the Ramsays must now be sent to. Catherine, my dear, will you write to them?"

Catherine having obligingly complied with this request, the ladies had just commenced a most animated discussion on the bill of fare, when Sir Thomas entered, holding his favourite newspaper in his hand.

"I am come," he said, "to read to you this admirable speech of Canning's. It is a

most brilliant piece of eloquence. I think he gives the Whigs a pretty drubbing; but you shall hear."

While the Baronet was, as he imagined, conferring such a favour upon his auditors, not one of whom was paying the smallest attention, his lady, by no means satisfied with the interruption, to Catherine's great dismay, began, in a low voice, to consult her whether mulleghatawny or turtle soup should be selected for the approaching feast. Whilst her ladyship was in imagination decorating her table, a similar process was going on in the mind of her daughter, in regard to her person. And at the very moment when Sir Thomas had got to what he considered the most brilliant part of the speech, and when he never doubted but that they were all listening with breathless attention, his progress was suddenly arrested, by hearing Ellinor ask Catherine, what dress she meant to appear in. The astonishment of Sir Thomas may be conceived. He looked over his papers at the speaker,

—for as to Catherine, she had the good sense not to hazard a reply.

"A dress!" he at length exclaimed, taking off his glasses, and laying the despised paper on the table; "do you women ever think of anything but dress? Could this said dress of yours not stand till I had finished? Oh, no, even the most important debates about the welfare of your country must give way to these trumpery gewgaws."

"We leave the *foreign* affairs to men," said Ellinor, pertly; "but it is quite proper that females should be allowed the undisturbed management of the *home* department."

"Oh, really I have no doubt that you, Miss Ellinor, think yourself perfectly fit to manage all departments; but it is needless to argue with a silly girl." So saying, the Baronet seized his papers, and returned to the dining-room, there to cool his wrath, and finish the debate, which Ellinor had so unseasonably interrupted.

"I wish sincerely," said Ellinor, as soon as Sir Thomas had left the room—"that that odious *Courier* was expelled—papa quite bores us with stupid speeches. How can he imagine that we care about parliamentary battles?—they are the most tiresome things in the world."

"If you had listened but five minutes longer," said Catherine, "Sir Thomas would have gone away quite pleased. He was very near the conclusion, when you asked that unlucky question."

"Oh, but one cannot always be on one's guard; and to tell you the truth, I quite forgot papa was reading aloud; but indeed, if it puts a stop to these public readings, you ought to be greatly obliged to me."

CHAPTER III.

I loved thee once, I'll love no more,
  Thine be the grief as is the blame;
Thou art not what thou wast before,
  What reason I should be the same?
He that can love, unloved again,
Hath better store of love than brain.

AYTON.

The important day at length arrived, and the whole Balfour family were seated in the drawing-room before Ellinor had half completed her toilette, who cared little for the Balfours, but quickened her motions considerably on learning that her military friends also were below, being very unwilling to lose a moment of their society, and not at all disposed to allow Miss Louisa Balfour to enjoy the smallest particle of their attention.

To please herself, and to plague Louisa Balfour, Ellinor resolved to have eyes and ears for no one but Willoughby; and she did not for a moment doubt his readiness to enter into an animated flirtation, as she had long been aware of his admiration. But, in her great desire to annoy Miss Balfour, she forgot that there was another who would be equally hurt by her conduct. With her usual caprice, Ellinor had for some time bestowed all her smiles on Willoughby, and scarcely deigned to notice Spencer, who affected to be entirely engrossed by Catherine, while, in reality, he was watching every look and word of her volatile cousin, whose undisguised preference of Willoughby gave him the deepest uneasiness.

Deceived by these appearances, Willoughby never doubted that Catherine was the object of Spencer's attachment, and fancied that he was conferring the greatest possible favour on his friend, when he engrossed the attention of Ellinor, and so left

him to the undisturbed enjoyment of Catherine's society. Spencer had for some time observed Willoughby's attentions to Ellinor, and with that proneness to imagine evil, which is common to all lovers, believed him to be seriously attached. Ellinor's conduct, too, wounded and displeased him. He could not conceal from himself the painful truth, that, from the first day of her acquaintance with Willoughby, she had rather courted than repelled that gentleman's attentions, while his uneasiness at her thoughtless and capricious conduct was evidently either unnoticed or disregarded.

Frequently did Spencer vow never to see her again; but these prudent resolutions were but too often broken, and, in spite of his wise determinations, he was still a constant visitor in Hope-Street. He tried to persuade himself that he did not wish to go there, but it was proper to do so.—Sir Thomas had been so remarkably kind and attentive to him, and Charles was his

particular friend,—and why should he give up their society because Ellinor was capricious? No, no, that would be unjust—he would call occasionally—it would prevent disagreeable remarks—they would part friends; and as the regiment would probably soon be on the move, the affair would terminate without any unpleasant eclat.

Thus Spencer reasoned, and, at the close of his reflections, he generally found himself in the presence of his fair enslaver, who was most ungenerously abusing the power she had over him—a circumstance which ought at once to have opened his eyes to her real disposition; for the woman who tramples on the best affections of the heart, who returns disdain for admiration, cruelty for kindness, and contempt for devoted attachment, is unworthy of exciting a pure and steady regard. But if Spencer had been aware of the nature of Willoughby's sentiments, he had not been so much alarmed. As yet, Willoughby felt admiration only. He was not a man whose heart was to

be taken captive by beauty. It required many qualifications to be united in the woman whom he would solemnly engage to guide, support, and cheer, in all the trials incident to human life, and whether Ellinor Lennox was to be that woman, he could not as yet determine; but had he known how inferior were her mental to her personal beauties, her power over him had been quickly overthrown. At present he saw in her an engaging, animated girl, a little giddy perhaps, and rather too fond of admiration; but young, beautiful, and gay, and flattered by the homage of numerous adorers, it was not wonderful that she sometimes deviated from strict propriety. In this manner did Willoughby excuse to himself actions and sentiments not exactly in accordance with his ideas of female dignity; and where is the man who will not find some apology for the woman who flatters his self-love and vanity, even though it is at the expense of that decorum which is so lovely an ornament in the female

character. If Ellinor had distinguished any other man in the pointed manner she did Willoughby, he would probably have been the first to condemn her; but being himself the object of her witcheries, he passed a mild sentence on them; and on her entering the room, and seating herself beside him, he was perfectly ready to pay her those little attentions which are agreeable to all women, but which were particularly so to Ellinor Lennox.

Every word and look of Ellinor were now closely watched by Miss Louisa Balfour, and Spencer, who was seated beside her; but this only stimulated her to increase the attention with which she listened to the conversation of Willoughby, who she now discovered held very elevated notions of dignity and propriety, and the somewhat exploded opinion of the necessity of a strict performance of our duties, whatever might be the sacrifice. Changing her mode of attack, she therefore talked most feelingly on the necessity of relinquishing our own

wishes to oblige others; said a vast deal in praise of those who scrupulously perform their every-day duties; in short, played her part so well, that Willoughby began to sigh and say to himself, what a treasure she will be to the man who is so fortunate as to gain that guileless heart.

While this was going on in one part of the room, Brooke and Ashley were conversing with Catherine, to whom their manners were so agreeable, she gradually relinquished her usual grave reserve, and entered into conversation, with a spirit and vivacity which perfectly enchanted them; and as she did not lavish her attentions indiscriminately, her frankness on this occasion was perceived and highly appreciated by both gentlemen.

Charles, in the meantime, was in agonies, and so unable to withdraw his attention from the trio, that he made some very ridiculous replies to Miss Balfour, who was questioning him on the birth, parentage,

and education of Major Willoughby. At length, greatly to his relief, dinner was announced, and the party adjourned to the dining-room. For once in his life, Spencer rejoiced that he was only a captain, as he had no doubt of Willoughby being seated among the seniors at the head of the table; but pretending not to hear Lady Lennox, the Major very coolly took possession of a seat next to Ellinor, while Spencer, internally bewailing his ill fortune, was forced to place himself between Miss Ramsay and Miss Balfour, while Brooke and Ashley supported Catherine.

The dinner passed off much like other dinners. Sir Thomas, Charles, and Spencer thought the ladies sat an age, while Ellinor, Willoughby, Brooke, and Ashley thought her ladyship retired too soon. At last, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room, and yawned away an hour, at the end of which time they were joined by the gentlemen. Willoughby placed himself by El-

linor, and, after a little conversation, begged to have some music, and led her to the harp, at which she willingly seated herself, for the double purpose of pleasing Major Willoughby, and provoking Miss Louisa Balfour. Ellinor was in excellent voice, and gave a very beautiful air with taste and feeling; and most gratifying to her vanity were the compliments paid her by the company in general, and Willoughby in particular. After enjoying for a little while the homage of her admirers, she good-naturedly requested Miss Louisa Balfour to favour them with a song, being perfectly aware that her style was bad, and her voice worse. But as this was not the opinion Miss Louisa herself entertained of her vocal powers, she did not long resist the request of Ellinor; and after the usual declarations of inability to sing or play anything worth listening to, she seated herself at the instrument; and selected a noisy bravura. Ellinor allowed Willoughby to listen to her till she saw he had detected all her faults,

and then she engaged him in a half-whispering conversation, which fully answered the purpose for which it was intended—that of annoying the performer.

When Miss Louisa had finished, Ellinor said carelessly, " I have surely heard that song before. Oh, now I recollect, Captain Norton used to sing it frequently—Pray, where is he now ? I believe he is married ?"

Miss Louisa, with a heightened complexion, stammered out, she really did not know; but she believed—yes, she certainly had heard—that he was going to be married.

" Is it the handsome Norton you speak of?" said Willoughby, who, engrossed by Ellinor, did not notice the embarrassment of Miss Balfour. " I know him very well; he is really a fine fellow. I understand he carried many Scotch hearts away with him. There was a report of his engagement to a lady in Edinburgh, but I suppose there was no truth in it. Did you never hear of it ?"

" Oh, yes !" replied Ellinor, " frequently:

but I never gave much credit to it. Norton is not a man to be easily caught; indeed, I have heard that he received attention, instead of paying it. If it was so, I am very glad that the lady was punished —such conduct degrades the sex. Don't you agree with me, Miss Balfour?"

Miss Balfour, who felt that Ellinor had introduced Norton's name on purpose to mortify her, was too indignant to make any reply; and it was fortunate for Ellinor that the conversation was interrupted by the carriages of the visitors being announced; for if Willoughby had discovered that Ellinor was so malicious as intentionally to wound the feelings of any one, from that moment her power over him would have ceased. The company soon after broke up, each carrying with them their different feelings. Miss Balfour, now the mortal enemy of Ellinor, breathed nothing but revenge against the author of her mortification. Spencer was more than ever enraged at, and in love with, Ellinor. Ashley and

Brooke meditated on the perfections of Catherine, while Willoughby was seriously asking himself if he were seriously in love.

As soon as the party had left them, Sir Thomas asked his lady to play chess with him, for which purpose they adjourned to the library. Ellinor retired to her dressing-room, where, throwing herself on a sofa, she revolved the occurrences of the day; and so perverted was her disposition, that, on a review of all the circumstances, she received as much pleasure from the conviction of the pain she had inflicted, as from the knowledge of the admiration which she could not but feel that she had excited in that heart, where she now desired to reign.

Catherine's retreat from the drawing-room was intercepted by Charles:—a short time decided his fate. Her rejection of his suit was too firm, to leave him any hope that perseverance would induce her to alter her determination. They parted with mutual expressions of perfect esteem; and, if that were possible, the affection of Charles

was increased by the mingled delicacy and kindness of Catherine, on this very trying occasion.

Conscious of his inability to conceal his anguish from his family, Charles prudently absented himself; and while they believed him to be at the country-house of a friend, he was lamenting in solitude the downfall of his dearest hopes. Finding himself unable to rejoin his family, he wrote them, to say he was on the point of setting out for Cheltenham, for the purpose of visiting a particular friend residing there; and, desiring his servant and horses to follow him, he was far on his way south, before either objection or remonstrance could reach him.

CHAPTER IV.

Then rose among the female tribe a strife of silks and satins,
Miss Holder's chair's announced, and Mrs Bubble's maid and pattens.
In groups the company pair'd off; some chairing it, some walking,
But all fatigued with doing nought, save playing cards and talking.

The Rout.

"So," said Miss Kennedy, as she and a few more inquisitive cronies were assembled round Miss Macdonald's tea-table; "so, I suppose you have all heard that Mr Charles Lennox is off to England?"

"Off to England!" said Mrs Barton; "I never heard a word of it. What has taken him there?"

"Not heard of it!" rejoined Miss Kennedy. "Where have you been hiding yourself,—the whole village is ringing with

it? I heard it first from my Jenny, who had it from an acquaintance of hers, who had it from Lady Lennox's maid, Campbell, who told her, with tears in her eyes, that Mr Lennox was off; not that Mrs Campbell cared for Mr Charles, but it seems she held a pretty flirtation with his man James, who, she said, had been obliged to follow his master, in such a hurry, that he did not stay above an hour or two with her."

"But we don't want," said Miss Barton, "to hear of Mr Charles's man; we would rather hear of his master."

Miss Kennedy, without deigning to reply to this remark, continued her conversation with the simple Mrs Barton.

"I understand," said Miss Jenny Nettles, "that the departure of—a little more sugar, if you please, Miss Macdonald: that will do,—oh, no more cream—that the departure of Mr Lennox was quite unexpected by all the family, except indeed his cousin Miss Dundas, who, I am told, was the only person aware of his intention."

" No such thing," exclaimed Miss Barton; " Miss Dundas no more knew of his departure than you or I did, till he was fairly off; and he left a note for Miss Dundas, saying, that her obstinacy and cruelty had driven him to this step,—and vowing never to return, unless she would promise to marry him in spite of Sir Thomas's teeth."

" Ladies !" said Miss Kennedy, with a sententious air, " allow me to explain the business—I ought to know something about it, as the Lennoxes are old friends of mine."

" They must be old indeed, if they are her cotemporaries," whispered Miss Smith to the lady next her.

Miss Kennedy meanwhile went on.—" I had it from the very best authority, that Miss Dundas has positively rejected Mr Lennox, who has on that account left home so suddenly. They say he has taken it very much to heart. Sir Thomas, I am told, made his niece give her solemn promise

never to marry him; so that it is all nonsense what we heard some time since, that Sir Thomas had given his consent. Poor thing, it is very hard upon her! She deserves great praise for giving him up, though perhaps, if all be true that is said, it is no such mighty sacrifice—for some people say she does not care a straw for him."

"Sacrifice, indeed!" replied Miss Nettles; "who in their senses would believe such a thing! I dare say he never was in her offer. What! a girl in Miss Dundas's dependant situation refuse such a match; and when she knows that the estate is entailed and must come to Mr Lennox—besides, Sir Thomas can't live for ever. By the by, he is looking very old-like just now."

"I agree with you," said Miss Macdonald; "Miss Dundas knows too well what she is about, to quarrel with her bread and butter. I could bet a pair of gloves, that if Mr Lennox had asked her, she would not

have taken two biddings—they would have been off by this time. Refuse him, indeed!"

"I am sure," said Mrs Smellarat, "I never think of meddling in the concerns of my neighbours; but I must say, that it was not altogether right in Sir Thomas to let the young people be so much together; for we all know, Miss Kennedy, that it is the most naturalest thing in nature for young folks to fall in love; and it seems to me that Sir Thomas should have thought of all these things before he took his niece home. But, as I said before, I have no curiosity about my neighbours—though I may say between ourselves, that Sir Thomas should have been mair foresighty,—it's no time now to be boggling at the marriage; but they say her ladyship is for it—Do you give that belief?"

"Belief!" replied Miss Kennedy; "she was even more enraged about it than Sir Thomas; but now that Miss Dundas has rejected her son, she is quite pacified."

"You really think, then," said Mrs Barton, "that she has refused him?"

"Think!" retorted Miss Kennedy, "I know it for a fact. Lady Lennox, poor woman, is very imprudent,—not but what she was perfectly safe with me; but it is not every one who can be trusted with family secrets."

"Miss Dundas," said Miss Barton, "must feel very uncomfortable, knowing herself to be the cause of her cousin's banishment. I am told that she has kept her room ever since his departure; and that her face is as white as paper, and her eyes as red as ferrets', with crying. I have never seen her out since he went away."

"I heard," rejoined Miss Macdonald, "that she had gone from home, and I did see Miss Lennox on the sands the other day alone, that is to say, without Miss Dundas; for she had three or four officers dangling after her."

"I assure you," replied Miss Barton, "you will find my statement correct, for I had it from a quarter that I can depend upon;

and I again repeat, that Miss Dundas is still keeping her room."

"Will any of you ladies take another cup?" inquired Miss Macdonald. A general negative was given to the proposal, in consequence of which the tea-equipage was hastily dismissed.

"I wonder," said Miss Barton, as she seated herself close to the window beside Miss Nettles,—"I wonder if it is true that Miss Lennox is to be married to Captain Spencer. Some people say that Major Willoughby is the favoured admirer; but for my part, from all that I can learn, she flirts as much with the one as the other. I know for a fact, that she corresponds with some of them; for Miss Mackinlay's servant, Peggy, is acquainted with Sir Thomas's man, William, and he called in to see her as he was going to the barracks with a card, and somehow or other Miss Mackinlay got sight of the card, and thought there was no great harm in looking through it, and she told me that she saw something about meet-

ing next day on the sands; and Miss Mackinlay said, that though she did not care about the matter, yet she thought she would just put on her bonnet, and take a turn at the hour mentioned; and that to her amazement, she found Miss Lennox and Captain Spencer there, walking arm in arm. By the by, Miss Macdonald, speaking of Miss Mackinlay, have you heard that her brother is just going to be married to a lady with ten thousand pounds?"

"Indeed!" said Miss Macdonald, "that is quite new to me; I did not hear the report before. Does it take place soon?"

"Immediately," replied her friend, who was perfectly aware of Miss Macdonald's penchant for the gentleman; "and I hear he has presented her with a most expensive set of pearls, and that he has ordered an elegant carriage from London."

"I am glad to hear he can afford all this," replied Miss Macdonald, forcing a laugh; "but if he goes on at that rate, the lady's ten thousand will not last very long. But

who are those passing ?" she exclaimed, with the view of drawing the attention of her visitors from herself.—" That is certainly Miss Lennox and one of the officers."

At this intelligence the whole bevy made a rush to the window.

" Did not I tell you," said the exulting Miss Barton—" Did not I tell you that Miss Dundas was unwell; Miss Lennox being alone, confirms the truth of my story. I think, good folks, you will pay a little more attention after this, to what I relate."

At this moment of triumph, Catherine, accompanied by Willoughby, appeared in sight, and as if to give Miss Barton the lie on every point, looking strikingly lovely and animated.

Miss Kennedy, happy to have her revenge, set up a most audible titter. " I must say," exclaimed she, addressing Miss Macdonald, " that Miss Dundas is a very rosy ghost; but perhaps her fine complexion is borrowed to conceal the ravages of grief. If Miss Barton calls Miss Dundas pale, I can

only say she does not know white from red."

"Who is that with Miss Dundas?" asked Miss Nettles.

"That is Major Willoughby," replied Miss Kennedy.

"I wonder," said Mrs Smellarat, "if the officers are going to sup with them? I dare say they are; for when I was in the market yesterday, Lady Lennox's cook came in with a basket that might have held a whole sheep; and when I was haggling with the butcher about a fine big tongue I wanted to get, his wife came and took it away, saying, it had been bespoke by Lady Lennox; but I did not believe one word of what she said. She just wanted to favour the Lennoxes, because she thinks them better customers. A pretty sum their butcher's account must come to; for when I was in, that very day, the cook took away six principal roasts, besides other things, and never asked the price of them. Sir Thomas will be a ruined man some day."

"Bless me, Miss Macdonald," exclaimed Miss Nettles, "I did not know you were acquainted with any of the officers. There is a soldier coming in at the gate. That seems to be a parcel of books he is carrying—Oh! I fancy it is some mistake—he is away again."

"I shall ask what he wanted here," said Miss Macdonald, rising to pull the bell. "What did that soldier want who came in just now?"

"He asked where Sir Thomas Lennox lived?"

"Were those books he was carrying?"

"Don't know, ma'am," replied Betty, pertly; "I never asked what he was carrying."

"You may go down stairs," said her mistress.

As soon as Betty was shut out, the latter returned to the investigation of this mysterious circumstance.

"I dare say these are music-books from some of the officers," said Mrs Smellarat; "I am told that the Lennoxes are very

musical. Miss Lennox plays the harp remarkably well, and Major Willoughby spends most of his time accompanying her on the flute; he is there regularly every day. But, bless me, here is the soldier again, and still carrying the books. Suppose I open the window, and ask him if he is looking for any house?"

"It is more proper that I should ask him," said Miss Macdonald, and opening the window, she asked if he was looking for Sir Thomas Lennox's house?

"Yes, ma'am," replied the soldier, respectfully touching his cap, "but I have not been able to find it."

"Are these music books that you are carrying?—from Major Willoughby, I suppose?"

"Yes, ma'am, I am carrying them to Miss Lennox;—the Major is there just now,—but I have not been able to find the house."

"My servant will direct you," replied Miss Macdonald; while her visitors crowd-

ed to the window, that they might not lose a word of this dialogue.

"I thank you, ma'am," said the man, again touching his cap, "I am very much obliged to you."

"'Tis just as I thought," said Miss Macdonald, shutting down the window; "they intend staying the evening too;—fine doings seem going on there. I dare say that poor fellow will get a good drubbing, for being so long with the books: I saw one of Sir Thomas's servants pass some time ago, seemingly looking for some one."

"I wonder," said Mrs Smellarat, "what kind of music it was—Moore, I suppose."

"I hope," Miss Kennedy, "that Miss Dundas's eyes will be dry enough for her to see to read it."

"Whose livery is that?" said Miss Barton to Miss Macdonald.

"That is Sir Thomas Lennox's coachman—I was sure I had seen him pass; but what is that he is carrying? it is like tea-

bread; but surely they must have had tea long ago—it is half-past eight o'clock."

"'Tis neither more nor less than tea-bread," said Miss Nettles, "for I saw both seed-cake and Naples biscuit on the plate. But," continued she, "here comes the coachman again, with the soldier, and a finely dressed sort of lady with him."

"That," said Miss Kennedy to Mrs Barton, "that is Campbell, Lady Lennox's maid."

"Considering," said Miss Barton, "her great grief for the absence of Mr Lennox's valet, she seems to be in tolerable spirits."

"I should know that green spencer," observed Miss Macdonald; "yes, yes, it is the very one Miss Lennox wore for a few weeks, when she first came here: it appears to me to be perfectly new: at any rate, it is surely too good to be given away, especially to a servant—that girl is too well dressed for her station. I declare, one can scarcely tell the ladies from their maids;

and that one seems as giddy as her mistress; which is saying a great deal."

As the Lennoxes were fairly housed for that night, the scandal-mongers broke up their meeting; but not before agreeing, that they should again sit in judgment on the Monday following, at the house of Mrs Barton, where it was expected that the members should come prepared with matter for a new debate.

CHAPTER V.

Love hath its hours of agony, when Hope
Burns flickering in the socket of the heart,
And, with a withering smile, pale Jealousy
Looks on to see it die.

H. G. B.

" I AM surprised, my dear Ellinor," said Catherine one day, as they were seated at work together—" I am surprised that you can take such pleasure in wounding poor Spencer; 'tis hardly fair, I think, to trifle with his affections in the manner you have been doing of late; he looks so wretched when you flirt with Major Willoughby, that I really wish they would not come together."

" I don't see," replied Ellinor, " what right Spencer has to expect that I will

speak to no one but him. I presume I am just as much mistress of my actions as he is master of his, and of late he has himself set me an example of fickleness, for all his attentions are directed to you; so you can't blame me without implicating him."

"How can you say so, when you know that it is your conduct alone which has occasioned the change in his; one kind word or look from you, would instantly recall him."

"But I am not in the least disposed to bestow any such word or look upon him."

"That is just what I blame you for."

"'Tis strange to hear you blame me for a lack of encouragement, when you incessantly preach to me that I give too much."

"To some, certainly far too much; but your own conscience must tell you that, to Captain Spencer, you have either given too much or too little. If you do not mean to carry matters farther with him, you have certainly given him cause to say that you have not used him well; for you must be sensible that before you were acquainted

with Willoughby, he had every reason to believe that his attentions were anything but unacceptable."

"I am sensible of no such thing," said Ellinor, angrily; "Spencer received no more encouragement from me than I have given to fifty others."

"That is no extenuation of your conduct; besides, Spencer was probably not aware that it is your mode to give equal encouragement to all your admirers; he would therefore naturally infer from your behaviour that he was not indifferent to you—what then must his sensation be, on finding himself supplanted by another. I pity him sincerely."

"You have become very much interested in Spencer all of a sudden," said Ellinor, with a sneer; "and as pity is akin to love, I shall expect soon to see you deep in the tender passion. He seems very ready to be consoled for my cruelty; but have a care, lest I suspect that your great pity for Spencer is occasioned by your admiration of his

friend. You may, perhaps, flatter yourself, that were I out of the way, you might succeed in your designs on Willoughby; but I tell you very candidly, that you may give up all hopes of the kind—Willoughby is the man—and I have not the slightest intention of carrying matters farther with Spencer, to which you so kindly and disinterestedly advise me."

"You, Ellinor," replied Catherine, "are the only person in the world who would dare to breathe such insinuations; believe them you cannot. I am proud to say, that every action of my life disproves them; you yourself who utter them, do not give them a moment's belief. — Ellinor," she continued, struggling to suppress her emotions, "we have passed our childhood, our youth, together, and with all your faults, I love you; and I cannot bear to see you on the point of marring your own happiness without making an effort to save you. Spencer loves you tenderly, devotedly; he is a man with whom any

amiable woman might find happiness. Willoughby also loves you, but he has very exalted sentiments regarding our sex. He esteems you, and on that is his love founded; but let him once witness your petulance, caprice, and injustice—let him discover that you have cruelly trifled with the affections of Spencer, and he is lost to you for ever. Spencer sees your faults, and loves you with them all. Choose then on which you will bestow your heart; and oh, my dear Ellinor, strive not only to appear, but to become truly amiable."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Willoughby and Spencer.

"How do you do, Major Willoughby?" said Ellinor, receiving him with even more than her usual frankness, while she honoured Spencer only with a slight nod—"I hope you have been quite well since we had the pleasure of seeing you?"

Willoughby, highly gratified by her very flattering reception, was more than usually

attentive and agreeable; on observing which, Ellinor cast many triumphant glances at her cousin; while poor Spencer, finding himself wholly overlooked, tried, by conversing with Catherine, to conceal his deep mortification.

But Catherine, wounded by Ellinor's accusations, shocked by her coquetry, and grieved for Spencer, whose restless and unhappy countenance but too plainly showed how keenly he felt the neglect of his capricious mistress, proved but a silent and unentertaining companion, which, though unable to rectify, she sincerely regretted, as her taciturnity left Spencer more leisure to observe the motions of his rival, and of Ellinor, whose gaiety appeared to increase in proportion as the countenance of Spencer became more and more melancholy and discontented. Willoughby, who was quite unconscious that to rage and pique he owed, in part at least, the extreme affability of his companion, entered with great spirit into an animated flirtation, which, however,

truth obliges us to say, commenced on the lady's side, and, engrossed by this amusement, he forgot there was any other object in the room; nor did he even observe that Catherine had quitted it, till a deep sigh from Spencer, who was vainly trying to occupy himself by turning over the leaves of a music-book, arrested his attention, and made him turn round to see from whom the doleful sound proceeded.

"Spencer," said Willoughby, now first observing his paleness and dejection, "my dear friend, are you well enough?"

"Perfectly so," replied Spencer, while indignation flushed his brow.

"I cannot believe it," rejoined Willoughby; "a moment since, you were as pale as death, but now your colour is sufficiently brilliant—don't you think so, Miss Lennox?"

"Oh, very brilliant," replied she, while her eyes fell under Spencer's penetrating gaze.

"Faith, Spencer," exclaimed Willoughby,

"if these hot and cold fits continue, I shall begin to believe you are in love.—Don't you think he has all the symptoms?" continued he, addressing Ellinor.

"I am no judge of these subjects," she replied, deeply blushing.

Just at this moment Catherine, who had been called from the room, now returned.

"Miss Dundas," said Willoughby, approaching her, "we have been bringing a serious charge against my friend Spencer; he appears inclined to deny the accusation, and you come very *à propos* to assist us in sifting the affair—If you," continued he, addressing Ellinor, "will bring forward the charges, Miss Dundas and I will hear the pleadings, and then pass sentence on the culprit."

"If Miss Dundas has anything to do in it," replied Ellinor, with a heat which surprised both gentlemen, "the sentence will not be too lenient."

"Are you then so severe a judge?" said Willoughby, turning to Catherine.

"So it appears," replied she, coldly, at the same time seating herself at a distance from the trio, and taking up her work.

Willoughby, who was a great observer of tones, saw that there was something wrong, and his curiosity was excited; but, as Catherine continued silent, he again addressed himself to Ellinor. "Well, Miss Lennox," said he, "have you prepared your charges against the offender?"

"Not I," replied Ellinor, in some confusion, and trying to hide the embarrassment occasioned by Spencer's reproachful gaze; "I have no charge to make against Captain Spencer."

"Whatever he may have to make against you," replied he pointedly.

"O," said Ellinor, trying to laugh, "I dare say your catalogue of offences is long enough; but we are all getting mighty humdrum, and I hate stupid people, so I shall go and rattle over a new waltz I got the other day. Come, and tell me how you like

it," continued she, addressing Willoughby. He followed her to the instrument.

"I wish," he whispered, as her taper fingers were flying over the keys—"I wish you would impart a portion of your liveliness to your cousin; she wants only a little animation to be quite captivating."

"You must think," replied Ellinor, "that I have too much spirit, since you wish me to part with some of it."

"By no means," said Willoughby; "I should not wish you to lose any of that vivacity, which I think so—so——"

"So annoying," replied Ellinor, with recovered good-humour.

"Charming, I would have said," answered Willoughby. "But pray, if it is a fair question, have Miss Dundas and Spencer quarrelled?—Spencer is an excellent fellow," continued he, in a graver tone, "and nothing would grieve me more than his suffering a disappointment of this nature. But whatever may be the determination of Miss Dundas, I feel certain that he will be treat-

ed with openness and candour, for your cousin possesses a sincerity of manner, which I have always admired; and, in spite of the coldness of her deportment, I can discern that she has too much feeling and principle to trifle with the best affections of an honourable man. But he has now seated himself beside her—play a little louder, and perhaps, under cover of your battery, they may make up this lover's quarrel."

The sensations with which Ellinor listened to this speech, may be more easily conceived than described; but, unable to reply to him, she gladly complied with his request, and continued to rattle on till she was interrupted by the entrance of visitors, soon after which Spencer departed, and Willoughby quickly followed him.

"That was a very handsome man who was sitting by you," said Miss Bruce to Ellinor; "pray, who is he?"

"Major Willoughby," replied Ellinor, carelessly.

"Is he in the regiment now here?" rejoined the lady.

"He is," replied Ellinor.

"I should like to know him," said Miss Bruce; "he appears to be very agreeable. I have not seen a countenance that pleased me so much for a long time.—Harriet," continued she, addressing her sister, "don't you agree with me in thinking Major Willoughby a very handsome man?"

"I rather think," replied she, "that I admire his companion more. He is perhaps not quite so superb as the other Don, but he is more to my taste—But," continued she, addressing Catherine, "don't look so frightened; I have no intention of becoming your rival; I suspect we broke up a very tender tête-à-tête, for you both looked very much annoyed when we entered."

"You never were more mistaken," said Catherine coldly; "Captain Spencer was saying nothing to me that you and the whole world might not have heard."

"Spencer," exclaimed Miss Bruce, "what a pretty name!"

"Of course," said Harriet, laughing, "I did not expect that you would acknowledge your *penchant*; but for all that, it was very evident."

"I can't acknowledge," replied Catherine, "what is not the case."

"And is this Major what d'ye call him your admirer?" said Miss Harriet, addressing Ellinor.

"Can you doubt it?" replied Ellinor, with fashionable ease.

"Can't say," replied she, with the amiable motive of mortifying Ellinor—"I don't think he has the least the look of a man in love—How different his careless disengaged air from that of the tender Spencer."

"Is that your opinion?" replied Ellinor, piqued at this surmise; "then of course it must be the case. A lady of your penetration cannot possibly be mistaken."

"I dare say," said Miss Bruce, "that Harriet, with all her airs of admiring Spen-

cer, has a plot upon the Major, and only talks so to tease you."

"Make yourself perfectly easy on that head," replied Ellinor, "for, I assure you, I don't mind her."

"Did you walk from town?" asked Catherine, shocked at this ill-bred sparring.

"Yes," replied Harriet, "and the wind blew us dreadfully about—my curls are all out—I dare say the gentlemen thought me a pretty fright—Don't you think so?"

"Really, said Ellinor, "I can't pretend to answer for their thoughts; but, as you may perhaps encounter them in passing the Barracks, you can ask them, and they will certainly satisfy your curiosity, for they are frankness and candour personified."

"I don't like quizzing," said Miss Harriet, in a pet.

"Neither do I," replied Ellinor; "I think it excessively impertinent."

Catherine rang for refreshments, and Lady Lennox entering soon after, the conversation took a new turn, and the visitors

having remained what Ellinor thought an enormous time, at length departed, but not without leaving their characters behind them, which were not spared by Ellinor, who strongly resented the mortifying supposition that Willoughby was not over head and ears in love with her.

CHAPTER VI.

By all the careless looks and careless words,
Which have to me been like the scorpion's stinging;
By happiness blighted, and by thee, for ever;
By thy eternal work of wretchedness;
By all my wither'd feelings, ruin'd health,
Crush'd hopes, and rifted heart, I will forget thee!

L. E. L.

SCARCELY a day now passed without a meeting between Willoughby, Spencer, and the Lennox family. There was a book or song to be returned, or a flute accompaniment was wanted; and when these excuses were not at hand, the gentlemen strolled on the sands, for which walk Ellinor now showed a violent predilection. Willoughby, though habitually unobtrusive, could not always conceal the admiration with which Ellinor inspired him, while she, with a woman's intuition on this subject, penetrated his sentiments and gloried in her

captive. But still Willoughby spoke not of love. He appeared to be studying her character, investigating her sentiments and dispositions, and he seemed resolved not to commit his happiness to her keeping, till he found that she was worthy of the trust. Thus occupied, the uneasiness and jealousy of Spencer passed unobserved; for Willoughby, conscious that Ellinor gave, on all occasions, a preference to his society, never for one moment doubted that Catherine was the object of Spencer's wishes; and as she, compassionating his evident unhappiness, always received him with marked kindness of manner, Willoughby became more and more convinced of the correctness of his opinion; and if at any time the indignation of Spencer drew from him a laconic or disdainful reply, Willoughby, attributing it to some trivial disagreement with his fair mistress, passed it over with good-humoured forbearance.

One fine evening that Willoughby was seated beside Ellinor, while Catherine was

drawing at a table near them, the conversation turned accidentally on some of the gentlemen of Willoughby's regiment with whom the ladies were acquainted.

"Ah," exclaimed Willoughby, "how much I wish you knew my friend Bagot; you would be charmed with him."

"Indeed," replied Ellinor, gaily; "then why don't you introduce him?"

"He is not with us. Just before our coming to Scotland, he obtained leave of absence for some months; and from the tenor of his last letters to me, I fear we shall lose him altogether."

"What is the matter?" asked Ellinor; "is he going to marry and grow stupid?"

"No," replied Willoughby, "he is not likely to marry early; for his whole time is devoted to soften the lamentable situation of his mother, to whom he is enthusiastically attached. She was seized some time since with a sudden and violent illness, after which she became totally blind. She lost her husband several years ago, and

Bagot is her only child; so that, in all probability, he will relinquish his profession, and devote himself entirely to her. When he is with her, he is never from her side, and she lives but in his presence. It is affecting to witness his tender, his almost feminine cares."

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Catherine, in a feeling tone.

"Silly fellow!" cried Ellinor; "why can't he engage a companion to live with her, to see that she does not fall into the fire? It is great folly for a man to give up the army, and all the dear delights of active life, for the sake of leading an old blind woman about."

At this hard-hearted and unfeeling speech, away flew half of Ellinor's graces and charms; and Willoughby sat gazing at her with a countenance which expressed equal surprise and consternation. Catherine blushed deeply, Willoughby remained silent, and Ellinor, seeing the error she had committed, endeavoured to repair it,

by passing it off as a jest, and by praising the exemplary conduct of Captain Bagot. But the feelings of Willoughby had been too harshly jarred to allow him to continue the conversation; and in this uncomfortable state the party remained till the entrance of Lady Lennox, which was felt by all to be an inexpressible relief.

"Catherine, my dear," said she, on entering, "I have just had a letter from a Mrs Cathcart, inquiring the character of Barbara, whom we parted with at the last term—Will you answer it for me?—Major Willoughby," she continued, "I hope you will forgive me for being so rude as to talk of domestic concerns before you; but every one knows they must be attended to."

"If I am the smallest restraint," replied Willoughby, "I am off."

"I shall accompany you to the library," said Catherine to Lady Lennox, "where we can settle all these matters."

"There's not the least occasion for that," replied her ladyship, "since Major Wil-

loughby is kind enough to say we don't disturb him; so I beg you will remain where you are. But what sort of character do you think we must give her? She was not good tempered, and I had great doubts of her honesty. You must recollect that I lost three lace frills and two cambric night-caps when she was laundress; and the very week before she went away she singed two of my pocket-handkerchiefs in a dreadful manner. And don't forget to mention that she knows no more about small-plaiting than the man in the moon. Indeed, I think she has a good deal of assurance to expect that I will recommend her as a laundress. Sir Thomas's shirts were a shame to be seen the whole time she was with us; and Ellinor missed both some money and a pink silk handkerchief out of her drawers. To be sure, she should not have left the drawers open, which I believe is her constant practice; but that is no excuse for Barbara."

"But, my dear aunt," replied Catherine, mildly, "we are not certain that Barbara

took these articles; it might have been some of the other servants, and it would not be just to deprive her of a situation on vague suspicion."

"But," rejoined her ladyship, "as we had suspicions, you surely would not say we thought her honest; and I am sure you are too conscientious to recommend such an abominable laundress to any one."

"If," said Catherine, "I believed that she took the articles that were missing, I certainly would not assist her in procuring another place; but having my doubts as to that, I do not think it would be right to charge her with a crime which she perhaps never committed. But we certainly ought to mention to Mrs Cathcart, that several things were lost while she was with us, but that we had never been able to ascertain, among so many servants, which was the culprit. As to her ironing, I shall merely say it was indifferent; it really was not worse than indifferent, and you know

she was remarkably neat in her person, and very obliging."

"I dare say you are right, my dear," replied her ladyship; "when their very bread depends on our report, we ought to lean to the side of mercy; and above all, we should never omit mentioning any circumstance that is in their favour. But when you have finished this business, will you add up the weekly bills for me? I have just got them in."

Ellinor, who saw how much her unfortunate remark on Mrs Bagot, had injured her in the opinion of Willoughby, now tried to obliterate the impression; and by way of appearing very amiable and attentive, said, "I shall add up these bills for you, if you please, mamma."

"You add up the bills!" replied her ladyship, in a tone which sufficiently expressed her surprise at this unusual offer; "surely something extraordinary is about to happen, when you interest yourself in domestic affairs. I hope this active fit

may continue; but for the present, I shall employ Catherine, as she always transacts these affairs."

At this rebuke Ellinor actually blushed; while Catherine, anxious to terminate the subject, said hastily, that she would do what Lady Lennox wished in the evening.

An embarrassed pause ensued, which was at length broken by Willoughby, who arose, took leave with a grave countenance, and departed.

Absorbed in painful reflection, Willoughby walked slowly home. The occurrences of the morning wounded and grieved him. One moment he accused Ellinor of unfeeling flippancy; and the next, he attributed all that was wrong in her conduct and sentiments, to innocent and thoughtless gaiety. Still her words recurred incessantly to his mind; and he could not conceal from himself, that they left there an impression far from favourable to her.

He at length arrived at the Barracks, and having some regimental business to

transact with Spencer, he sought him in his apartment. After discussing the affair on account of which he wished to see Spencer, Willoughby, observing his gravity and dejection, and anxious to dispel his gloom, gaily addressed him.

"Well, my friend," said he, "how does the siege in Hope-street go on, and when are we to have you Benedict? If I did not know to the contrary, that gloomy air would almost persuade me, that the grand affair had taken place at least a year ago."

"Major Willoughby," said Spencer indignantly, "this is conduct, sir, which I did not expect from you, nor from any man of honour."

"Conduct!" repeated Willoughby, in great amazement; "your words, sir, require explanation."

"If," replied Spencer scornfully, "you will be pleased to review your conduct for the few last months, you will be at no loss to comprehend my meaning."

"Captain Spencer," said Willoughby,

"this is language which I neither understand, nor will submit to; my conduct ever has been, and, I trust, will continue to be, irreproachable: but if you, sir, have any accusation to bring against me, let it be done in an open, honourable manner, and I am ready to meet the charge."

"Honour!" retorted Spencer; "'tis but a cloak for deceit and hypocrisy. But there was a time," said he, with increasing vehemence, "when I did believe that you, Willoughby, would have been the last man on earth to act to me as you have done. But that time is past,—and I find that you also can deceive, and that too under the mask of morality and religion."

"Spencer," exclaimed Willoughby, in considerable agitation, "the belief that you labour under some delusion alone prevents me from calling you to account for your most unjust accusations;—but I am convinced that some mistake has happened. Say, then, at once, in what way you suppose I have wronged you; for from your

words and manner, I am led to believe, that you consider yourself to be aggrieved by what you are pleased to term my dishonoutable conduct."

" And what not only I, but all the world, must term dishonourable. I did not expect," continued he, with bitterness, " to find, in the fastidious, moral, religious Major Willoughby, a man of the world, who does not scruple to employ every art of which he knows so well how to avail himself, to supplant his friend in the affections of the only woman he ever truly loved. Now, sir, this is my charge;—deny it if you dare?"

" I do deny it,—solemnly deny it," exclaimed Willoughby. " Spencer," he continued, with increased agitation, " by Heavens, you do me wrong!"

" This is too much," exclaimed Spencer. " What, sir, do you dare to deny that you have used every effort to rival me in the affections of Miss Lennox? Will you deny,

that to you I stand indebted for her present neglect and scorn?"

"Miss Lennox, did you say?" replied Willoughby, in the utmost amazement; "Miss Lennox!"

"Yes, sir, I said Miss Lennox,—you at least should not forget the name: but wonder, sir, is not refutation. You will scarcely, I should think, hope to disprove attentions to Miss Lennox, which so many have witnessed."

"I deny them not," said Willoughby; "but I assure you, I never for one moment believed that it was Miss Lennox to whom you were attached. You, Spencer, must have the candour to allow, that there was nothing in her manner to you, which could lead me to believe that she loved you: on the contrary, such was her reception of me, as to induce a belief that her heart was free;—and your attentions, Spencer, were they not all directed to Miss Dundas? I solemnly declare, on the word of a man of honour, that, till this moment,

I never entertained the slightest doubt of your attachment to her. With regard to Miss Lennox, I renounce her—her conduct is inexcusable: and if the encouragement you met with, equalled what she bestowed on me, she must be a coquette—a cold, heartless coquette—unworthy of our regard. Now, my dear Spencer, I no longer wonder at your heat; but I thought you knew me better, than to believe me guilty of such base conduct."

"Willoughby," exclaimed Spencer, offering his hand, "I have wronged you, and I am sorry for it; but I beseech you, make some allowance for a man half distracted with love and jealousy."

"Think no more of it," said Willoughby, warmly shaking the offered hand, "think no more of it, as I mean to do. In fact, we ought rather to rejoice that this business has come to an eclaircissement, and that we have had our eyes opened to the character of Miss Lennox. Were she beautiful as an angel, I would not now unite my fate to hers.

Like me, Spencer, resolve to forget her. What faith, what confidence, could you repose in one who has treated you so shamefully? Believe me, my dear Spencer, you will never secure your happiness by a union with Ellinor Lennox."

"I feel," said Spencer, "that she has not used me well. Before you were known to her, she received my attentions in a way that induced me to believe they were agreeable to her; but since that period, you have completely engrossed her. Yet could I but hope that I had touched her heart, and that her conduct to you was occasioned only by a love of admiration——"

"A love of admiration! my dear Spencer!—Do you consider to what fatal consequence that passion so often leads?"

But observing him pained by this discourse, he broke off that part of the subject, and asked Spencer what line of conduct he meant to pursue.

"In my opinion," said Willoughby, "we ought to visit there as usual; but we should

refrain from all particularity of behaviour, and so gradually withdraw from the dangerous intimacy—Do you agree with me?"

"In truth, Willoughby," replied Spencer, "I hardly know myself what are my intentions—I can neither resolve to leave her, nor can I almost wish to make her mine. There is, I allow, much truth in what you say concerning her; yet, with all her faults, I love her—yes, I most sincerely love her. She is young and thoughtless. Let us not judge her harshly.—Indulged from her very cradle, incessantly flattered and admired, can we wonder at her imperfections? but she possesses both sense and feeling, and in proper hands, do you not think there is reason that she may yet become an amiable and estimable woman?"

Willoughby, seeing Spencer's great reluctance to give up all thoughts of Ellinor, would not then press the subject, but contented himself with saying, "Well, Spencer, let us do nothing rashly—She may, as you observe, improve; but as you value your

future happiness, be cautious how you commit yourself. Beware how you take a step of such importance without full deliberation—study her well. I, too, for your sake, will scrutinize every word, every action. Sincerely, truly, do I hope I may find myself mistaken in the opinion I have formed of her; but if not, Spencer, you must not, shall not, marry her."

Spencer having thanked Willoughby for the friendly interest he took in his happiness, the friends separated; the one resolved to be guided by duty and principle alone; while the other, irresolute and unsteady, could form no determination with regard to his future conduct, but left to time and chance to decide whether his attentions to his beautiful and capricious enslaver should be continued or withdrawn.

CHAPTER VII.

I am not in a sportive humour now.
Comedy of Errors.

One day soon after this conversation, Willoughby thought himself obliged to call on the Lennoxes. He found Ellinor and Catherine only at home, with whom he entered into conversation; but in spite of his efforts to appear gay and unconstrained, there was a change in his manner, which Ellinor remarked with uneasiness, but desirous of pleasing him, she tried to adapt herself to his tone, and accordingly commenced a moralizing, sedate, and sentimental conversation, in which she displayed so

much good sense that Willoughby began to doubt the correctness of the opinion he had formed of her, and several times asked himself, if one who talked so well, and appeared to have such correct sentiments, would really be a heartless coquette; but unfortunately for Ellinor, a circumstance occurred at that moment which instantly effaced the more favourable impressions which her studied discourse had made on him. They were still engaged in this tête-à-tête, (for so it might be called, as Catherine took no part in the conversation, but appeared to be engrossed by her netting,) when Sir Thomas walked into the drawing-room. Ellinor, highly provoked at this interruption, did not address one word to him; but Catherine, instantly throwing off her taciturnity, entered into conversation with Sir Thomas, and exerted herself so much, that Willoughby thought he had never before seen her so animated and engaging.

Sir Thomas, who had been walking a long

time on the sands, and who was rather fatigued with the exercise, asked Ellinor, and that too at the very moment when Willoughby had requested to hear his favourite song, to take a game at chess with him. Ellinor, who thought this a most unreasonable request, replied, disobligingly, "Oh, I can't play just now, I am going to sing to Major Willoughby; besides, I hate chess at this early hour; it is surely more an evening amusement." On hearing this, Willoughby instantly begged that Miss Lennox would indulge Sir Thomas, saying he would have the pleasure of hearing her another time; but Catherine cut short the debate, by insisting that Sir Thomas should accept of her as Ellinor's substitute; and throwing her work aside, she rose and placing the chess-table before her uncle, seated herself, and began to arrange the pieces.

Delighted once more to have the Major all to herself, Ellinor opened the instrument, and never doubting that he was listening with breathless attention to her li-

quid notes, she gave her favourite song with great effect. But Willoughby, so far from being enraptured, as in duty bound, scarcely heard her. He was busily engaged contrasting the conduct of the cousins. Miss Lennox, thought he, speaks well of duties; but she appears to be incapable of making the most trifling sacrifice to the wishes of another. Miss Dundas never harangues on such topics, but her sentiments are sufficiently manifested by her readiness to oblige—her efforts to smooth down the asperities of conversation; and yet, with all this, there is a dignity of manner, a self-possession which entirely precludes the least suspicion that the gentleness of her disposition would lead her into any improper compliances. By the time Willoughby arrived at this conclusion, Ellinor having finished her song, turned to him with a bewitching air, to receive his homage; but she was nearly petrified with amazement on seeing him regarding Catherine with looks of warm admiration; and to add to the

provocation, seemingly quite unconscious that her strain had ceased. Recalled by the dashing down of Ellinor's music-book, to a sense of what was expected of him, Willoughby said a few pretty things with an abstracted air, and soon after sauntered to the chess-table, under pretence of overlooking the game. Ellinor, piqued beyond her powers of concealment, swept across the room, and on leaving it, shut the door with a force, which electrified Catherine; and even Willoughby, though by no means nervous, was startled by the report.

I believe none of my readers will be disposed to deny, that doors have a language of their own; and certainly, on this occasion, the one above mentioned gave audible warning to Catherine of an approaching storm, and for a moment confused her, and caused her to make a false move.

"Heavens, Catherine!" said Sir Thomas, "what can you be thinking of? That move will ruin you.—Major Willoughby, if she

does not play better, I shall turn her over to you to receive a few lessons."

Willoughby bowed, smiled, and said he would be but too happy to have such a pupil.

"No, no," said Catherine, hastily; "but when this game is finished, I shall relinquish my seat to Major Willoughby. I shall learn much better by looking on."

The game proceeded, concluded, and Catherine was the loser.

Sir Thomas now insisted that Major Willoughby should take his place; but Catherine, who did not wish to play with Willoughby, endeavoured to persuade Sir Thomas to give her her revenge; but his favourite newspaper coming in at that moment, he resisted all her entreaties, and began without ceremony to read the debates, leaving Catherine and Willoughby in undisputed possession of the chess-board.

Ellinor was no sooner in her own apartment, than she repented of having left the drawing-room; so, after taking a few turns

across her room, she once more descended to see what was going on below, where her chagrin was considerably augmented on finding Catherine and Willoughby at chess. Bitterly did she now regret having designated it as an evening amusement only; and as she felt that she could not now offer to play with Willoughby, after having refused to oblige her father, she was forced to content herself with a station near the players, where she pretended to be observing the game. A game she was indeed watching, but it was not that of chess.

Catherine, who saw the gathering storm, now said carelessly, at the same time rising from her seat, "Come, Ellinor, you know you are an excellent chess-player; do try and retrieve my blunders. I really can't stand the loss of two games, for I see this is going against me; and though I know you are not very fond of it in the morning, yet I hope you will oblige me to-day, were it only to save my character as a chess-player."

Willoughby, as far as politeness to Ellinor would allow him, opposed this plan, saying, "However glad he would be to have Miss Lennox for an antagonist, he could not think of parting with Miss Dundas till their contest was decided."

Catherine, however, insisted on Ellinor's taking her place, which she did, though but half pleased with the conduct of Willoughby, who, on his part, being by no means delighted with the exchange, moved his Bishops, Kings, and Queens, in solemn silence.

Catherine, seeing the dissatisfaction of Ellinor, and the gravity of Willoughby, retired to the library, resolving not to return to the drawing-room till assured of his departure.

Ellinor, though in high displeasure with Willoughby, tried to conceal her chagrin; but, occupied in endeavouring to divine the cause of the alteration in his manner, she played so carelessly, that Willoughby, though almost equally inattentive to the

game, after a short contest, won it; and without once offering to give her her revenge, almost immediately after took his departure, leaving Ellinor full leisure to reflect on all that had passed, and ponder on that alteration in the deportment of Willoughby, which she alternately regretted and resented.

A few days after this occurrence, to the surprise of the family, and the pleasure of Catherine, a letter was received by Sir Thomas from Charles, requesting his father's consent to his marriage with an English lady, a widow, of a good family, and possessing an independent fortune. Although Sir Thomas felt somewhat surprised at the rapidity with which the matter had been negotiated, the description Charles gave of the lady and her appendages was too satisfactory to admit of his hesitating to receive her into his family. His consent, therefore, was no sooner asked than it was granted, and, as may be supposed, in very well-chosen high-sounding terms.

When Charles set off for England, in deep despair at Catherine's rejection of his suit, he firmly believed that no woman breathing would ever have power to make him forget his incomparable cousin. The thing was impossible. He never would find her equal, therefore he never would love again.

So Charles reasoned and thought, as many have reasoned and thought before him. Like all people in love, he imagined his affection must last for ever, and like them, too, he, after an interval, the duration of which is left to the imagination of our fair readers, found himself still enslaved though he had changed his enslaver. In justice to Charles, however, we must allow, that, on his arrival at Cheltenham, he was as miserable as a rejected lover need be, and that he would most probably have continued much longer in the despairing state befitting his situation, had not his melancholy been chased away by the smiles of this agreeable widow, who spared no ef-

forts to attract and attach the dejected and interesting heir of a baronetcy and a large estate.

On the noble principle, perhaps, of being above disguise, the lady did not hesitate to display her partiality; and as a man is never so vulnerable to the attacks of one fair lady as when he has just been rejected by another, Charles, grateful for her affection, persuaded himself that he was actually in love, and in a moment of tenderness offered her his hand. As the lady had no one to consult, the affair was soon arranged, and they waited only for the consent of Sir Thomas to complete their marriage.

"I wonder," said Ellinor, "what kind of a woman this widow is. I did not think that Charles would marry an Englishwoman. I presume they will be down immediately. I am all impatience to see her. Charles does not say whether or not she is handsome; but I am sure she must have a considerable portion of beauty, or she could not have caught him. I observe he men-

tions, that she has a little girl by her former marriage. I hope they won't bring it with them; children are such troublesome little wretches."

"Indeed," replied Catherine, "I should like very much to see Charles's wife. I hope she is amiable. I esteem Charles so much, that it would give me a great deal of uneasiness if I could not love the woman he has chosen. But don't you mean to write to congratulate him?"

"Why," said Ellinor, "I was not thinking of that exertion, but since you have put it in my head, I daresay I must send him a few lines; but suppose we make it a joint epistle—I shall confine myself to questions concerning her outward frame, while you may require a clear statement of her mental qualifications. I really hope she is tolerably good-looking—I should feel horridly mortified to have a fright of a sister-in-law."

"But consider," said Catherine, smiling, "that in that case your charms would ap-

pear more resplendent from the force of contrast."

"Oh! but I flatter myself that I don't require a foil," rejoined Ellinor.

In the middle of this discourse, her ladyship entered. "Well, girls," she began, "are you not amazed to hear of Charles's marriage? I declare I have not yet recovered from the surprise. I wish we could get him to put it off till we go to our own house; for it will be very inconvenient for me to receive them here; and then, I suppose, she will bring a waiting-maid and a servant for the child. I would have been as well pleased if she had had no child, but that can't be helped now. But really these English people are so difficult to please, and take so much attention, and so much room, that I am sure I don't know how we shall manage. We have barely accommodation for our own domestics, far less for the servants of other people. It was very thoughtless of Charles to marry just now, when he knows how little room we have; but 'tis so like men,

they have no more consideration than a cat. I am afraid, Catherine, I must ask you to take the little girl with you. I can easily get one of our small folding-up beds from town for her, which may stand in a corner of your room. To be sure, it is not very agreeable to have children always with one; but I don't see how it can be otherwise, unless Charles is prevailed on to postpone his marriage, for Sir Thomas will not hear of their taking a furnished house. He says they must come here; and you know very well, that if he promised to lodge a whole regiment, we would be obliged to find beds for them. It is really very provoking."

"Oh!" said Catherine, good-humouredly, "I daresay we shall manage very well. I shall willingly take the little girl with me. It will be no hardship; for you know I am very fond of children. The nursery-maid may sleep with Mary; and if you will order the south attic to be cleared of the hampers and packing-cases, it will do very well for Mrs Lennox's maid; and I trust Mrs

Lennox will prove to be a woman of more sense, than to be particular about accommodation for the short time we shall continue in this house."

"Sense, or no sense," replied her ladyship, "all Englishwomen are troublesome about these matters; and then I know Charles will fret himself into a fever if every thing is not in the highest order. Does the boy think that I can add to the size of the rooms?—And then the kitchen is so small; and we have no hall. Our servants will not have room to turn themselves. And then, I suppose, that in honour of Charles's marriage, Sir Thomas will make them all tipsy. William, I perceive, is a little given to that already. I noticed last night, when he was carrying away the tea equipage, that he staggered almost to the other side of the room. I thought the whole set was gone. He is getting very careless; and, I daresay, these new comers won't improve him. A pretty houseful we shall have. I know the

noise in the kitchen will be quite intolerable."

Impatient to put an end to this harangue, Ellinor called to Catherine to come and begin her letter; and her ladyship finding herself deprived of her auditor, quitted the apartment. The writing-desk was just unlocked, and the pens and paper laid out, when Sir Thomas stalked in to favour them with a perusal of the letter he had just penned to his son. The volatile Ellinor heard scarcely one word in ten, but the better sense of Catherine taught her to appreciate properly the effusions of an affectionate father addressing a son on an occasion so momentous, and she listened with unaffected interest to sentiments and advice, which did equal honour to his head and his heart.

"I hope," said Ellinor pettishly, the moment the Baronet left them, "we shall have no more of these teasing interruptions.—Pray, Catherine, mend me a few pens."

The pens were mended, and Ellinor dashed off a couple of pages in a short time. She

then enjoined Catherine to take her place, who added her most affectionate good wishes for his happiness. The letter was then duly signed and sealed, and dispatched, with Sir Thomas's more elaborate epistle, to the post-office.

CHAPTER VIII.

Allured and frighten'd, soften'd and afraid,
The widow doubted, ponder'd and obey'd;
So were they wedded. CRABBE.

Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak—
And speak I will. *Taming of a Shrew.*

As the day approached on which they were to be introduced to their new relative, all was anxiety and bustle in the house. Hours before the travellers could possibly reach Hope-street, the impatient Sir Thomas kept pacing from the window to the door, from the door to the window, watching every vehicle which rattled down the street, and stopping every second to listen for their approach. This restless fit gave great umbrage to his lady, who, in her peregrinations from room to room, to ascer-

tain that all things were in order, encountered her lord and master at every turn; for Sir Thomas was not contented to await their arrival in one apartment, but pranced from the drawing-room to the dining-room, and from the dining-room to the drawing-room, to the great annoyance of his lady, and discomfort of Ellinor, who complained to Catherine, that the creaking of his shoes, and his perpetual motion, would infallibly throw her into a hysteric fit, if she did not go instantly, and get him to stay in one place. She was just about to obey, when he again appeared.

"I wonder what can keep them," he said, on entering; and pulling out his watch, "they should have been here long ago; but, to be sure, when men have ladies for travelling companions, they never can be certain of their time: I never yet met with a punctual woman—always dilatory—always late. It can't be the badness of the roads which detains them; we have not had a drop of rain for six weeks—Let

me see—what is the distance of the last stage from this?—I think it is fifteen miles;—fifteen did I say?—I think it must be more: but yet, as they will not have much heavy luggage, they could easily drive it in two hours—I suppose they will have four horses. But, Catherine, run down to the dining-room for the almanack—you will find it on the mantelpiece."

"I am sure, papa," said Ellinor, "I am sure it is not of the least consequence how many miles the last stage is; and I am sure your dancing about from room to room, won't bring them one minute sooner. If you would but sit still in one place, you would not think the time half so long. You have been out and in, and in and out, not less than a hundred and fifty times within this quarter of an hour, and have regularly left the door open.—For my own part, I don't expect them this hour."

"You don't expect!" said the angry Ba-

ronet; "women know much about calculation, to be sure. I tell you, that if they reached Haddington by twelve, they should be here in ten minutes. Come, I bet you a pair of gloves, they are here in ten or fifteen minutes—Not expect them for an hour!—ha! ha!"

"Indeed, and I will bet no such thing; 'tis needless betting with you—you never pay them. I am wise enough to know, that you still owe me a new pelisse, that you lost about Miss Mansfield's rouge—I know better than to bet with you;—pay your old debts, before you contract any new ones."

In the middle of this dispute, Catherine entered with the almanack.

"Come away, Catherine," exclaimed the Baronet; "Miss Ellinor there says they won't be here these three hours, and——"

"I happened only to say one," said Ellinor.

"Well, one be it, but I am certain you

said three; however, it does not matter: but you will see they will be here instantly."

"I wish," said Catherine, with the view of terminating this dispute—"I wish, dear uncle, you would take a game at chess with me, I want to have my revenge; you know you have two games on me, and I confess I don't like to be beat, particularly at chess."

"Play at chess just now!" said Sir Thomas, "such a proposal, when I look for Charles and his wife every moment!"

"I think it is the wisest thing you can do," said Ellinor.

"But, as I happen to differ from you," said Sir Thomas, in a piqued tone, as he thought of his creaking shoes and open door, "I don't choose to play, even though Miss Ellinor thinks it such a wise proposal." Catherine, seeing that it was in vain to expect that he would remain quiet, gave over her attempts to engage him at chess, and had just taken up a book *pour passer le*

tems, when her studious fit was broken in upon by the voice of her ladyship.

"Catherine," she exclaimed, as she burst into the room, "what in the world shall we do! I never knew anything so unlucky; the carrier has not yet brought the little bed for the child! I went just now into your room to see that all was right, and fortunate it is I did so, and no bed is there. I never knew anything to equal the stupidity of these servants; and I sent Campbell to town on purpose, that we might have it in time. She says that that blockhead, Simpson, the carrier, faithfully promised to bring it down last night; and here we expect Charles every instant, and no bed has made its appearance. I really think that John Simpson deserves to be severely flogged for his negligence; but only come and look at the state your apartment is in. I ordered your wardrobe to be moved to make room for this said bed, which does not seem to be forthcoming, and the empty space betwixt your wardrobe and the window gives

the room a bare unfurnished look—come, and satisfy yourself; but what to do with the child, I am sure I don't know."

" Don't give yourself any uneasiness about that," said Catherine, as she rose to follow her ladyship ; " I will take the little girl with me, and I dare say we shall soon be very good friends."

" 'Tis all very well talking ; but suppose the child is shy, and won't go with you, it will scream all night, and disturb the whole house ; I know the nature of children better than you do, and, depend upon it, we shall have no peace till we put her in a bed by herself. Had Simpson only done as he was desired, it might have been up and ready by this time."

Ellinor's voice interrupted this harangue. " Mamma, Catherine, come down stairs; they come."

They quickly descended, but on reaching the drawing-room, they found the Baronet actually foaming with rage. " Lady Lennox," he exclaimed, as she entered, " what

is the meaning of that confounded bed being brought here just now ?—They cannot drive up to the door for that odious carrier's cart, which blocks up the way—And what will Mrs Lennox think, but that we are obliged to send begging round the country for beds to accommodate them ! Could that block-head not have waited till they were in, but he must bring his confounded bed at this unlucky moment ? I declare I am quite ashamed to face Charles and his wife—Why was it not brought down before this ?—But, good Heaven, will you only hear how they are ringing !—as I live, they can't get in ! —Where are all those scoundrels ?—'Tis so like you women, leaving every thing to the last !"

" And 'tis so like you men," said Ellinor, "to be squabbling there, in place of going to welcome your daughter-in-law ; she will think she has got into the family of the Furies."

Sir Thomas, thus reminded of his duty, calmed his indignation, and descended to

welcome Charles and his bride; where we shall for the present leave him, to account to our readers for this sudden explosion of wrath and indignation.

But a few seconds before Charles's dashing carriage drove up to the door, the humble cart of John Simpson, the dilatory carrier, made its appearance, containing the little bed, the non-arrival of which had caused such uneasiness to her ladyship, and subjected Catherine to a most unedifying harangue of no short duration. The domestics, who had in turns been popping out their heads every five minutes since ten in the morning, to look for the travellers, and who had received strict injunctions from Sir Thomas to be in the way when they appeared, whether to please their lady, or assist John Simpson, they best know, chose the inauspicious moment when the travellers stopped at the door, to lend their assistance in carrying into the house this bed of contention; consequently, when Charles and his bride arrived, the cart blocked up

the entrance, and there was not a soul in the way, either to let them out or in.

Charles having presented his lady to Sir Thomas, flew past them to the drawing-room, and the next moment he was in the arms of Lady Lennox. He had just saluted Ellinor and Catherine, when his father and his lady entered; but Mrs Lennox, far from imitating the conduct of her lord and master, contented herself with extending a finger to her new relatives, while her daughter Clara, a spoiled child of four years old, would neither look at, nor speak to any one, but kept holding by her mother's gown, in defiance of her repeated, "La, child, do let go, you are really very troublesome."

As it was drawing near the dinner hour, Charles proposed that his lady should retire to change her travelling-dress, and knowing his father's dislike to be kept waiting, and the unconscionable time his bride devoted to her toilette, he followed her to quicken her motions; and as her ladyship went to show them their apartment, and

Sir Thomas had quitted the room, the cousins were left alone to comment upon their new connexion.

"How do you like her?" said Ellinor, as soon as they were all fairly shut out; "for my part I hate her already—Did you ever see such a freezing manner? And did you observe how she drew back when mamma was going to embrace her? She was afraid, I suppose, that her rouge would be detected; I could swear that brilliant complexion is not her own; and then her ancles—Did you notice them?—they are as thick as a post: I thought there must be some weighty reason for her wearing such long petticoats; people are not so fond of hiding good ancles when they happen to have them. In short, Catherine, I am horribly disappointed in her; she is not like the woman I thought Charles would have chosen. I am convinced we shall fight; but we won't be singular in that, for I am told it is quite a phenomenon for sisters-in-law to agree."

"We must not be too rash in our judgment," said Catherine, who was secretly as much disappointed as Ellinor, in the choice that Charles had made; "you know we are all strangers to her, and it is a formidable thing coming among new connexions, who are all on the watch to spy out every little fault. We must give Mrs Lennox a fair trial before we condemn her; perhaps she may improve on acquaintance. I hope so, for Charles's sake; he would be so mortified, were his wife not approved of by his family."

"There is great room for improvement, I must confess; but I suspect she is neither more nor less than a selfish Englishwoman, who will give herself very little concern as to what her husband's friends may think of her. She seems to me to be a heartless fine lady. I suspect we shan't be sorry when Charles gives her a house of her own; and did you ever see such a spoiled brat as the child is! I see we shall find it a very great torment. I wish she had left the little imp

behind, children are such horrid plagues in a house."

"That would have been unnatural, I think; and you must allow the child is very pretty, and, if she is kept in good order, we may find her a great amusement."

"I don't know what you may find her, but I am sure I shan't think it any amusement to have her always at one's elbow; I assure you, if she is troublesome, I shan't scruple to assert the privilege of an aunt, and give her a good slap. But I see nothing but a world of vexation before us."

"You had better take care what you do; you know that is a tender point with mammas, they think that is a prerogative which belongs to them alone; so, Ellinor, I would advise you not to meddle with Miss Clara."

"If Miss Clara's mamma does not think proper to apply the rod when it is necessary, depend upon it, I shall show her her duty. I have no idea of allowing spoiled children to tease me unreproved."

Here the entrance of Charles put a stop to the conversation. He approached Ellinor and Catherine with his usual kindness, and seating himself by the latter, began to interrogate her what she had been doing since last they met; and Catherine, happy in the thought that he had forgot his former attachment, entered with great spirit into a detail of all that had occurred since his absence. At this moment, Sir Thomas entered the room with his watch in his hand. "Do you think," he said, addressing Charles, "we may order dinner? I suppose your lady has nearly completed her toilette, it wants only a quarter to six."

Charles begged dinner might be ordered immediately, and rose to see what progress his wife had made in the important business of the toilette. He soon returned with the pleasing intelligence that Mrs Lennox would make her appearance in a few minutes; but her few minutes turned out full three quarters of an hour, and William had

twice announced that dinner was upon the table before the bride thought proper to appear.

Catherine felt for Charles; Sir Thomas, who sat opposite to him, kept his eyes fixed on his watch, impatient for the expiration of the few minutes; but when a quarter, and then twenty minutes passed, he became very restless; but when the hand pointed to half past six, he could stand it no longer, and, rising from his chair, said he would go down stairs and take a glass of wine, as it did not seem certain when Mrs Lennox would be dressed. At this, Charles, who was much fretted that his wife should give umbrage to his father the first day of their meeting, rose also to go to the apartment of his lady, with the determination of not leaving her room without her, but her entrance at this moment saved him that trouble. "Come away, my dear," he exclaimed in no very bridegroom-like tone; "my father does not like to be kept waiting, and dinner

has been on the table this half hour; 'tis nearly seven o'clock."

"Good la, is it so late?" replied his lady, without thinking it necessary to make the slightest apology for protracting their dinner to such an unusual hour; "I don't feel at all hungry, the luncheon we had on the road has quite spoiled my appetite; I don't think I shall be able to swallow a morsel."

"You ought to consider," said Charles, "that others may not have partaken of luncheon; we must in future conform to the hours of the family."

Sir Thomas now offered his arm to the lady, and they led the way to the dining-room.

Hardly had they got into better humour with one another, and just as the soup was removed, when Clara rushed into the room, and squeezed herself in between her mother and Lady Lennox.

"What brings you here, Clara?" said Charles.—"Anne, my dear," he continued,

addressing his wife, " you had better send her up stairs ; she is much too young to sit at table."

" Me not go up stairs," said Clara, at the same time grasping the arm of her mamma ; " me no like dine up stairs ; me cry up stairs."

" Do, Charles, let her stay, since she has come down," said his wife ; " I am sure she will be quite quiet.—Won't you, my love ?" she said, kissing the cheek of the really lovely child ; " you must promise to sit quite still, or papa will send you up stairs if you are troublesome."

" Nonsense," exclaimed Charles ; " children should be kept in their nursery."

" You know, Charles, all is new to her," replied his better half ; " you must give Clara time to get acquainted with your family. She always was a very timid child, which obliges me to bring her more forward than I would otherwise do."

" Mamma," said Clara, by way of refuting her assertion, " mamma, I say, give

me some of those pease, and a piece of that chicken."

"Hush, my love, you must wait till the company are helped; and you know, Clara, I have often told you that little girls should never ask for anything at table."

"But me not a little girl; me as big as Cousin Henry; and his mamma always gives him what he asks for."

"Well, well, only be quiet, and you shall have a little bit; but remember, you never shall have it again, if you are so rude as ask it."

"So you always say, mamma, and always give it to me."

"Miss Dundas," said Mrs Lennox, without attending to Clara's remark, "will you have the goodness to send a wing of that chicken to this noisy child?"

"It would be much more proper, I think," said Charles, fretfully, "to send the noisy brat to the nursery."

No one took any notice of this remark, and Catherine, by way of quieting Miss

Clara, sent her the coveted morsel ; but far from being satisfied with gaining this point, it seemed but an encouragement to new demands, and as Lady Lennox had too much good-breeding to deny the child's request in the presence of its mother, who was the proper person to interfere in the business, poor Clara was stuffed with a part of every dish at table. The conversation was chiefly confined to Clara, who asked her mamma innumerable questions, made remarks on all she saw, and, in short, engrossed the whole conversation ; and Mrs Lennox, in place of checking her, and giving her attention to her ladyship, encouraged her prattle, and seemed to think her the only person present worth listening to. In vain Catherine attempted to render the conversation more general : all her efforts for that purpose proved unavailing ; and truly grieved for her cousin, who seemed to be most heartily ashamed of his wife, and observing that even the politeness of Sir Thomas was beginning to totter, she gave Lady Lennox

a signal to move; and as the hint was understood, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room, leaving the father and son to the pleasure of a tête-à-tête; a pleasure which Charles, in his present humour, would willingly have dispensed with.

As Clara was fatigued with her journey, she soon became sleepy, and was carried to bed, in consequence of which the party in the drawing-room were left in peace. Lady Lennox from good-breeding, and Catherine from good-nature, endeavoured to amuse their new relation, who reclined languidly on a couch, the whole pillows of which she appropriated to her own use.

"I hope, my dear Mrs Lennox," said her ladyship, "that you will like Scotland. We cannot expect that you will forget your own country, but I trust that you will in time become partial to this."

"As to forgetting my own country," replied Mrs Lennox, "that is, as you observe, not to be expected; but as we are told that there is nothing so horrible but

that custom may reconcile one to it, I may possibly lose my dislike to Scotland."

Lady Lennox was quite thrown out. She was unwilling to believe that Charles's wife intended to be rude, and yet it sounded very like it. Catherine broke the pause by remarking the beauty of Clara.

"Yes," replied Mrs Lennox, "she is certainly pretty; and her extreme fairness, though not remarkable in England, strikes you probably as being very extraordinary; for I am told that most Scotchwomen have very dark coarse skins. I shall take care, however, not to expose her much to the raw damp air of this disagreeable climate; but I am still more anxious to prevent her language being corrupted by mixing with any Scotch children. I mean on that account to keep her always near me."

"There is one language, madam," said Ellinor, "which I would strongly recommend to your attention, and that is the language of good-breeding."

Mrs Lennox raised herself on her elbow,

and stared at the speaker; for she too, like Ellinor, had been a spoiled child, and unaccustomed to reproof; but fortunately at this point of the debate the gentlemen entered the room.

In vain, however, did Charles and Catherine exert themselves; the evening passed heavily away, and, after sitting out the usual time, it appeared to be a relief to all parties when the hour of separation arrived, and they were permitted to retire to their respective apartments, a privilege of which they quickly availed themselves.

A good night's rest having restored to the several members of the Lennox family their accustomed portion of good-humour, the party passed a few days in harmony; but this pleasing state of affairs was doomed to be overthrown. One evening, when the ladies were assembled in the drawing-room, Clara, who was romping through the room, looking at, and touching everything, now noticed Ellinor's harp; and sweeping her fingers over the strings, she called to Ellinor

to come and play to her: but Ellinor, who was in no humour to oblige either mother or child, and who was heartily wishing both of them across the Tweed again, in place of obeying this command, called to her in a very imperious tone to come back from the harp,—saying, that children should look at everything, but touch nothing.

This reproof irritated Mrs Lennox, who called to Clara in a tone no less imperious, to let alone the harp, and to come to her. But Clara had been too long accustomed to disregard her mother's commands to obey her now; and, in defiance of her repeated orders to desist, she still continued to pull the strings.

Ellinor's patience being now exhausted, she rose, and approaching the child, said, "Clara, if you again touch that harp, I shall turn you out of the room."

Clara looked up in her face, and with an air of defiance, then swept her hand once more over the strings.

Ellinor, now really enraged, took the

little rebel in her arms, and carried her towards the door, determined to put her threat into execution; when Clara, finding herself seized in so unceremonious a manner, began to kick and scream with all her force.

This scene effectually roused Mrs Lennox from her state of languor; and, equally enraged and amazed that any one should dare to punish her child, and in her presence too, she rose to rescue her darling, just as Ellinor had succeeded in pushing her out of the room. Clara not at all relishing this summary mode of proceeding, set up the most outrageous screams; and Mrs Lennox, opening the door, endeavoured to soothe the obstreperous child, and accused Ellinor of the most unheard-of cruelty: but as Clara, so far from being appeased by the caresses of her mother, continued to scream, and kick the unoffending door, Mrs Lennox, in absolute despair, lifted her up, and carried her into the room; but Clara would shriek nowhere but upon the ground; and

freeing herself from the arms of her mother, she rolled upon the carpet, increasing in noise at every turn.

Charles, whom this unusual riot had brought up stairs, found, on entering the drawing-room, his wife in strong hysterics, —Clara flying like a rolling-pin over the carpet,—Ellinor reading, or pretending to read,—and Lady Lennox and Catherine looking on in silent amazement. The presence of Charles quieted the spoiled child, and greatly abated the hysterics of his lady, who immediately began to lay her complaint before her husband; and as she told the story her own way, and Ellinor did not deign to justify herself, he at first thought that Ellinor alone had been to blame, and that she had used his wife extremely ill: but on observing that neither Lady Lennox nor Catherine corroborated the statement of his lady, he determined to ascertain the truth before passing judgment, and for that purpose applied to Catherine, begging her to relate what had

passed. Catherine, unwilling that Charles should know how much Mrs Lennox had mis-stated the case, and yet anxious to do Ellinor justice, hesitated what to reply ;— but her hesitation was enough. Charles instantly conjectured to whom the blame attached: he then dismissed Clara to the nursery, and taking the arm of his wife, he said, that as she appeared to be fatigued, he would advise her to go to her bed. He then accompanied her to her apartment—there, whether to give or receive a curtain lecture, we shall leave our readers to determine.

CHAPTER IX.

When Scotland was a kingdom, kings have stood
On yonder battlements; and in those halls,
In beauty's sunshine, chivalry has bask'd—
Nay, pass not lightly on: to the pure heart
The records of the past are sacred things.

H. G. B.

A FEW days after this fracas Sir Thomas proposed a drive to Edinburgh, to show Mrs Lennox the town, saying he was sure she would be highly gratified with the Scottish capital. But Mrs Lennox was not a woman who could be highly gratified with anything: however, as she did not very well know how to amuse herself, she consented to the proposal; and the ladies retired to equip themselves for the excursion.

As Lady Lennox declined being of the party, it was decided that they should all

go in the Baronet's carriage. So far all went well; but just as they were about to set out, Clara returned from her walk, and seeing them prepared for some expedition, insisted on accompanying them.

"You can't go, my love," said Mrs Lennox; "you are not dressed, and we can't wait till Jenkinson changes your frock and trowsers; so you must just stay at home, and if you are a good girl, I shall bring you some pretty toy from Edinburgh."

"But I will go," said Clara, stamping with passion at this denial. "I will go; my frock and trowsers are quite nice and clean, Jenkinson put them on this morning, and I won't be good, mamma, unless you take me with you."

"Anne," said Charles, "you surely don't mean to plague us with Clara; I shall ring for Jenkinson to take her to the nursery—you see you are detaining us all."

"I won't go to the nursery," screamed Clara, clinging to the gown of her mother; "I will go with mamma!"

"Charles," said his lady, not very well pleased that her darling should be called a plague, "you frighten the child—she is not accustomed to be spoken to so roughly.—Dry your tears, my love," said she, turning to the sobbing child, "you shall go with your mamma; no one else appears to have any affection for you."

"The carriage has been at the door some time," said Sir Thomas, "and, as I do not like my horses to be kept waiting, I beg you will come away."

On hearing this, Clara, dreading to be left behind, redoubled her cries to be taken; and Mrs Lennox, turning to her, said, "Well, well, you shall go; but you are really a bad little girl this morning."

"And whose fault is that?" said Charles. "If you have any regard for the welfare of your child, you ought instantly to punish her for her violence and disobedience."

Mrs Lennox paid no attention to this admonition, but, taking the hand of the still sobbing Clara, led the way to the carriage.

Little was saïd during the drive, and never before, perhaps, were five persons assembled together less inclined to play the agreeable to each other. Sir Thomas was lost in amazement, that a woman of sense could act so foolishly; for that Charles's wife must be a sensible woman, he never allowed himself to doubt. If Sir Thomas was astonished at her conduct, her husband was heartily ashamed of it; and poor Charles could almost have stamped with vexation, when he saw in what light his choice was regarded by his friends; but what most sensibly wounded him, was the dread of being supposed to have been influenced by mercenary motives; but here his conscience acquitted him. In fact, Charles, like ninety-nine men out of a hundred, knew very little of the disposition of his lady, till she became his wife. Before that period, she had spared no pains to attract and please him; and her partiality was so little disguised he could not avoid seeing it. Like many others of his sex, his vanity was so

wrought upon, that without taking time to study her character, he made her an offer of his hand, which even he thought was too eagerly accepted.

Just as our silent party arrived opposite the Barracks, they met Major Willoughby and Captain Spencer, who were on their way to Portobello, to pay their respects to Mrs Lennox. They stopped the carriage, and having been presented by Charles to his lady, conversed a little with her, and having promised to do themselves the honour of waiting upon her soon, they made their bows, and the carriage drove on.

" What a very elegant man that Major Willoughby is," said Mrs Lennox, which was the first remark she had made since setting out—" and he appears to be very agreeable. I am sure he is an Englishman —at least I don't think he can be Scotch— he has something so very prepossessing in his appearance."

Sir Thomas here made her a profound bow, while Charles said, with heat, " You

did not always think the Scotch so destitute of attraction."

"Oh," replied she, carelessly, "that was before the flood; but surely you will not be so unreasonable as to find fault with my admiration of my countrymen?"

Would to heaven, thought poor Charles, you had always confined your admiration to them!

"I dare say," continued this polite lady, "that you think there are no women in the world like the Scotch?"

"You are right, madam," said Charles, with a deep sigh; "every day as it passes, convinces me more and more of their superiority over all others."

Catherine, who was distressed at the conversation, tried to recall her ideas, that she might give a new turn to the discourse; but, like the friends of the unfortunate, they all deserted her at the very moment in which she stood most in need of them. At length, to her great relief, Clara, who

had now dried her tears, began to question her mother about everything she saw.

"What is that, mamma?" said she, as they came in sight of Holyrood-house—"what great house is that, with the gold balls on the top?"

"If you will lean forward," said Sir Thomas, addressing Mrs Lennox, "you will have a good view of the Palace of Holyrood."

Mrs Lennox, though not much interested on the subject, did for once as she was desired.

"Dismal!" said she, as she drew back her head, at the moment the carriage stopped at the Palace.

As Charles was still in great wrath at his wife, on alighting, he placed himself between Ellinor and Catherine, and hurrying them on, he left his lady to the care of Sir Thomas, a fate which she thought quite intolerable; but as it could not be remedied, she followed the Baronet in sullen silence.

On entering the Palace, the party pro-

ceeded to the great gallery, where Charles had the mortification of hearing his wife make one hundred and eleven silly remarks on the fanciful portraits of the Kings of Scotland; and as that was precisely one remark on each, we may think on the whole that he was very well off. They next visited Queen Mary's apartments, where the tattered state of her Majesty's bed called forth some sneers from the well-bred Mrs Lennox on the poverty of the Scotch.—"I wonder," said this amiable woman, "that his Majesty did not order a bonfire to be made of such trumpery. That bed is a disgrace to the Palace. I cannot bear to look at such worm-eaten trash.—Come back this moment," she cried to Clara, who was approaching to touch the faded crimson damask curtains. "Come back!" she exclaimed, with horror in her looks, as she caught and held the struggling child.

Ellinor smiled maliciously—Sir Thomas stared—Charles's countenance exhibited a crimson much more bright than the bed they were contemplating, while Catherine,

pitying his evident discomposure, drew him away, under pretence of wishing to look at some portraits in the adjoining room. After listening to remarks which indicated such a total want of taste and sentiment, Sir Thomas disdained to point out to Mrs Lennox the passage through which Darnley and his associates rushed in to murder the unfortunate Rizzio; therefore, turning to the person who was appointed to show the Palace, Sir Thomas entered into a long and learned discussion on many particulars connected with this princely residence.

"The Abbey," said the Baronet, "was erected by David the First, who, on account of his extreme liberality to the religious orders, was called by James the Sixth, 'a sair sanct to the crown;' but the populace defaced it greatly at the Revolution."

"That is true, sir," replied his conductor; "but it was not till the year 1768 that the roof fell in."

"I think," rejoined Sir Thomas, "that the flying buttresses on the south side of

the chapel were added by Abbot Crawford in 1483?"

"Flying buttresses!—flying buttresses!" exclaimed Mrs Lennox,—"how I should like to see them.—Do you show them, friend?"

The guide, though a little surprised at her passion for flying buttresses, answered civilly, that she would see them when she visited the chapel.

So eager was Mrs Lennox to enjoy the promised treat, she would not give the slightest attention to any of those objects which generally excite so much interest; even the apartments so lately honoured by the royal presence did not for a moment detain her steps. Taking the arm of Sir Thomas, she desired their conductor to precede them to the Abbey—a cursory view of which was all that her impatience permitted, ere she hurried this ill-assorted party to the Royal Chapel.

The displeasure of Sir Thomas being somewhat abated by this appearance of in-

terest, he deigned once more to take on himself the office of Cicerone, and thus addressed his amiable daughter-in-law :—" In the south-east corner of this Chapel is the royal vault, in which were deposited the remains of David the Second, James the Second, Prince Arthur, third son of James the Fourth, James the Fifth, Magdalen, Queen of James the Fifth, and"——

But here his list of defunct royalty was suddenly interrupted by Mrs Lennox exclaiming to the guide, " But the buttresses —you have not shown me the flying buttresses !"

" Flying idiot !" exclaimed the indignant Sir Thomas, as he strode out of the chapel.

The wrath of the Baronet could only be exceeded by the surprise of Mrs Lennox, when she at last saw these said flying buttresses, which, however, to her great amazement, she found to be standing stock-still. Casting on them a look of supreme contempt, she passed through the Chapel, without any other remark, than that it was full

of excellent nettles, which would be good feeding for Lady Lennox's turkeys; and, stepping into the carriage, she amused herself, and provoked her auditors, by humming, "Adieu, thou dreary pile."

As the servants had, before leaving home, received instructions as to the places that were to be visited, the carriage was now driven to the College, before which magnificent building it now stopped. "Pray, what are we to see here?" inquired Mrs Lennox. All but Catherine were too indignant to reply; she, however, answered, that there was in the College a very splendid Museum, which was highly deserving of her attention.

"I beg leave to inform you," replied Mrs Lennox, "that I have no taste for cracked shells and stuffed owls; besides, my shoes will be entirely spoiled if I cross that dirty pavement."

"In that case," replied Catherine, "we had better proceed directly to the Castle; you will perhaps be gratified by seeing the

Regalia. The crown is of pure gold, embellished with diamonds, jacinths, oriental garnets, chrysoprases, and amethysts."

"Oh," said Mrs Lennox, "that will be something worth looking at, provided the jewels are not false; if they are so, I shall easily detect them, as I am somewhat of a judge of these things."

"Look," said Catherine, "is not this view of the Castle sublime in the extreme?"

"Is that the Castle?" replied Mrs Lennox; "la, what a funny rock it stands upon."

Charles bit his lip, Catherine spoke to Clara, Sir Thomas looked from the speaker to the Castle and from the Castle to the speaker, while Ellinor said sarcastically, "Very funny indeed."

A solemn pause ensued, which was broken by Ellinor asking Charles what regiment was now in the Castle.

"It is the **th," replied he, "which arrived some weeks since; the regiment which preceded it suffered very much from scarlet fever just before it left this."

" How!" said Mrs Lennox; " are you taking me and my child into a place where the scarlet fever has been raging? Do you wish to kill us, sir?" exclaimed she, with increasing heat. In vain did Catherine represent that it was the last regiment, and not this, which had suffered from the fever; that all infection must be quite removed by this time, and that they were not going near that part of the Castle where the invalids resided. Mrs Lennox remained deaf to every argument, and though they were now within the precincts of the Castle, she obstinately refused to alight.

" Put up the step," cried Charles.

" Where shall we drive now, sir?" said William.

" To the devil," replied the Baronet.

" Home, William," said Catherine; and home they went.

The dinner passed in sullen silence, broken only by occasional questions from Lady Lennox, of " Did you see this and that?"

her ladyship not having observed their clouded brows.

If little was said in the dining-room, there was still less conversation in the drawing-room, where Mrs Lennox, having engrossed one sofa, and all the pillows the room afforded, very deliberately composed herself to sleep. She awakened, however, when tea was served; and afterwards roused herself sufficiently to partake of the good things which made their appearance on the supper-tray; she then, without taking the smallest notice of any of the family, sauntered out of the room and retreated to her apartment, after which the party separated by mutual consent.

As soon as the girls had shut the door of their dressing-room, the occurrences of the day became the subject of conversation. "I think," said Ellinor, "so far from this sister-in-law of mine improving, she becomes daily more insufferable. How Charles could ever think of marrying such a woman, appears to me little less than miraculous.

CHAPTER X.

" O the roast beef of Old England,
And O the Old English roast beef!"

" I TRUST," said Lady Lennox to Catherine, next morning, when they happened to be alone,—" I trust that Charles and his wife will not make a long stay with us; not that I would mind them much,—but really those English servants of theirs are enough to drive one distracted. What do you think the housekeeper told me just now? That they turned up their noses at a cold luncheon, and flatly refused to take it. Can you conceive anything half so impertinent? I hardly know what to do—I have half a mind to tell them, that if they do not chuse to take cold meat, they may

go without; but then I should be very sorry if they complained to Charles, though they certainly deserve to be punished for their sauciness, and I plainly see that Mrs Lennox would rather encourage than check their insolence. Indeed, between ourselves, Catherine, she is neither more nor less than an English dawdle; and if she pampers her servants as she does that poor child of hers, she will give them whatever they ask. Did you see how she stuffed Clara the other day?—ham and marmalade is a very improper breakfast for such a child. And what do you think I shall do about these servants?—dressing hot luncheons for them every day will be a great expense, besides setting a very bad example to our own domestics. In fact, I think they are the worse already of their English companions. Campbell is not half so respectful as she used to be; and Mr John, the other day, grumbled at being ordered to carry a parcel to the coach-office—so I shall not be sorry when we get quit of them.—But you have not yet

told me what I shall do about this business?"

"Indeed," replied Catherine, as soon as she could catch a pause, "I think if they are dissatisfied with cold meat, they deserve to have none; and I would advise you to forbid the housekeeper to bring you any more such messages,—and when they find that you are firm in your determination of not yielding the point, you will hear no more about the matter."

"I dare say you are right. I shall insist upon their eating up all the cold meat. I wonder who they think is to do it if they don't? And since Mrs Lennox has been here, Sir Thomas won't allow any dish to appear twice, which I think very great extravagance. But I wonder what is the matter with Mrs Lennox this morning, that she was not down to breakfast. I dare say I may as well go and ask for her—she likes attention."

As Catherine approved highly of this projected inquiry, Lady Lennox proceeded to

the apartment of her daughter-in-law, but she got no farther than the door, as Mrs Lennox was engaged in the arduous duties of the toilette. In place of desiring her maid to open the door, and inform Lady Lennox that she was dressing, she chose to convey that intelligence through it. Her ladyship, therefore, returned to the drawing-room, highly dissatisfied with the reception which had been given to her kind inquiries.

"La, ma'am," said Jenkinson to her lady, in no very respectful terms, "I wonder how long we are to stay in this here family. If I had known what strange people we were coming among, I would rather, ma'am, good mistress as you are, have quitted your service. I never before was treated with such disrespect as I have been since I came here."

"What is the matter now?" said her lady, in a careless tone; "have you been quarrelling with some of these Scotch savages? But, to tell the truth, I am no more fond of Scotland or Scotch people than you

are, and I mean to make a very short visit here. But what are you standing staring at there? Don't you see that I am waiting for my slip? make haste. Well, but what is your complaint against the natives?"

"Complaint indeed!" replied Jenkinson, who was pretty well accustomed to the peevishness of her mistress; "we have good reason to complain, when they won't allow us anything to luncheon but cold meat; and Richard and I have determined not to submit to such usage. Cold meat, indeed!—I am sure, ma'am, you never treated your servants in that mean way. It may do very well for the Scotch, who know no better; but I think, ma'am, your servants ought to meet with more respect. Richard and I have not had a comfortable meal since we came to this outlandish place."

"I think," replied Mrs Lennox, "that it is using my servants in a most shameful manner, to oblige them to eat up all the cold scraps in the house; but I shall speak to Mr Lennox this very night; and if his

family will not treat my domestics properly, we shall just leave them the sooner."

Jenkinson, pacified by the hope of once more enjoying a hot luncheon, resumed her good humour.

" Put a little more rouge on the left cheek," said her lady. " There, that will do. But pray, what have you done with your eyes to-day? you have pinned my gown all to one side. Pull it more to the right. I trust Miss Lennox won't take a fancy for it, as she has already done for my bonnet, which I hope she won't try on; for all these Scotch women have such odious large heads, I am sure she would tear it to pieces. But don't you think, Jenkinson, that she rouges?"

" Rouges! to be sure she does, ma'am; but not half so well as you, ma'am; for you know, ma'am, that Lord William Westford's butler told me, he heard his lordship say one day at dinner, that you, ma'am, rouged better than any woman in England."

" I think I have heard you repeat that above a hundred times already," said Mrs Lennox, pettishly ; " but if I rouge so extremely well, how happened his lordship to find it out ? When I make men believe that this bloom is all my own, I will then give credit to your story."

" There is one gentleman, at least, that thinks your complexion all your own. You know, ma'am, Mr Lennox always admired your fine colour, and had nearly quarrelled with Sir Walter Gerard for saying it was bought."

At this rebuff Mrs Lennox actually blushed ; but assuming a careless air, she replied, " It is of very little consequence to me whether Mr Lennox does or does not believe I rouge. But pray make haste. I think you are stupid this morning, and seem to have lost the use of your fingers."

Jenkinson, seeing that she had gone too far, endeavoured to make her peace by saying, " I am sure, ma'am, Miss Lennox will be a perfect fright in your bonnet. I hope,

ma'am, you do not mean to let her put it on her head, for she will stretch it so, that it will be quite useless to you. She will look quite horrid in amber, with such light sandy hair. And her eyes have no expression; they want the fire of yours, ma'am. But put on what bonnet she likes, she will never have your looks."

This speech had the desired effect, and Mrs Lennox, soothed by the flattery of her waiting-maid, soon got into better humour.

Charles now entered, to say that Major Willoughby and Captain Spencer were below, and he therefore begged that she would finish her toilette and come down. But though Mrs Lennox considered her attire to be quite good enough for her husband's family, she did not think it sufficiently elegant to be exhibited before the handsome Willoughby; and she bestowed so much time in altering her dress, that Charles in a rage declared, that if she did not accompany him down that moment he would go without her. But this threat produced no

effect on the incorrigible Mrs Lennox; and caps, flowers, and ribbons, still strewed the room, from which articles she was very composedly making a selection, when Charles once more told her he would not wait another moment.

"La, Charles, you are so impatient," said his provoking lady; "I never saw any one like you. You took good care to conceal your hasty temper before marriage."

"And you, madam, took equal care not to provoke my anger," replied her indignant husband, as he flung out of the apartment.

Mrs Lennox was, for a few moments, undecided whether to take a hysteric fit or descend to the drawing-room. A little reflection determined the question.

"Give me my French cap; I may as well go down as sit moping up here."

The important business of the toilette being now happily completed, Mrs Lennox entered the drawing-room with a magnificent sweep, and made three elegant curt-

seys, before she discovered that she was wasting her homage on Lady Lennox, who sat alone in solitary grandeur. Whether the ladies had gone out with the gentlemen, or the gentlemen with the ladies, we cannot pretend to determine. Certain it is they were gone, nor left "a rack behind," save rumpled chairs and sofas, whose melancholy state bore witness that wrinkles may be occasioned by cornets as well as cares.

CHAPTER XI.

'Twere well, says one, sage, erudite, profound,
Terribly arch'd and aquiline his nose,
And overbuilt with most impending brows,
'Twere well could you permit the world to live
As the world pleases. What's the world to you?

COWPER.

MISS KENNEDY having collected a new budget of gossip, hastened to share it with her friend Miss Macdonald, with whom she found Mrs and Miss Barton, and Mrs Smellarat.

"What a charming day this is," said Miss Macdonald as her visitor entered.

"Delightful," replied Miss Kennedy, "and I have taken advantage of it to pay my visit to Mrs Lennox."

"Indeed," replied Miss Macdonald, "and did you see her?"

"I am told," said Mrs Barton, "that Sir Thomas is repenting the opposition he made to his son's marriage with Miss Dundas, as he cannot endure his daughter-in-law; indeed, folks don't scruple to say that he quarrelled with her the first day she entered the house. I hear the lady has a temper of her own."

"As to Sir Thomas quarrelling with Mrs Lennox the first day they met, that I don't believe. Sir Thomas has some sense; but I dare say it was not the lady's fault, for, between ourselves, I think her a perfect vixen. I fear my poor friend Charles has made but a bad bargain. This comes of men marrying in a pet. I have it from the best authority, that they were acquainted only a few weeks when he popped the question, which he did just as they began a dance, and she accepted him before they finished it. She seems to have been in a great hurry to change her name. I fancy her late husband wished she had never borne his; poor

man, he died of a broken heart—we need not ask who killed him."

"Can you tell me," asked Miss Barton, "whether she wears a pelisse or a mantle? for I am thinking of getting my brown silk made up again, and——"

"Never mind your brown silk," replied Mrs Smellarat; "we would rather hear something more about these Lennoxes."

"I am sure," replied Mrs Barton, piqued that her daughter should be treated with so little ceremony, "I am sure, I wonder what pleasure people can find in prying into the concerns of their neighbours; for my part, I hope I am above such mean ways.—But, bless me, there is Barbara Sinclair and her cousin coming down the street; it is easily seen her father is in Edinburgh to-day, or she would not dare to be walking about with him in that open manner. It would be well done to give Mr Sinclair a hint of what is going on. My James met them last night parading up and down Rosefield Lane. I

suppose they thought nobody would see them there."

"I thought," said Mrs Smellarat, "that you never pried into the concerns of your neighbours; Miss Sinclair will probably tell a different story.—But, Miss Macdonald, have you heard much about Mrs Lennox?"

"No, very little; but it is reported that she has a horrid temper, and that all her chemises are trimmed with Valenciennes lace."

"I don't believe a word of it," replied Mrs Barton; "nobody in their senses would waste expensive lace in that way."

"I tell you, madam, it is true," said Mrs Smellarat, "for I had a part of one of these very chemises in my hand yesterday."

"Indeed!" said Miss Macdonald, "how did you manage that?"

"Why, I happened to be passing Sir Thomas's house, just as Jenny Soapysapples was coming out of the gate with a bundle like a hay-stack on her back; and having heard that the Lennoxes were very extravagant, I walked after Jenny up the street,

and seeing something dangling out of the bundle, I stopped her and said some of the clothes were dropping out, and offered to push them in for her; but before I did that, I drew the thing a little farther out, and found it to be the sleeve of a chemise, which was trimmed with rich lace, and set on so full, that I am sure there was a yard and quarter on every sleeve, that is, as near as I could guess, for I had not time to measure it."

"It is a mercy," said Miss Kennedy, "that Sir Thomas's estate is entailed, or Mrs Lennox would soon make his acres fly. I hear she is running through her own fortune—It is to be hoped that her daughter's money is properly secured."

"By the by, what kind of child is she?" asked Mrs Smellarat.

"The most spoiled brat I ever saw. She snatched my parasol out of my hand, and whisked it up and down ten times in a minute; and, while I sat in agonies, expecting every instant to see it broken into fifty

pieces, Mrs Lennox looked on with the most cool indifference; and she had even the impertinence to smile at my uneasiness."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs Barton, "there's my cook coming—what can she want? I'm sure I put Mr Barton's beef-tea at the side of his bed before I came out; but may be, honest man, he is wearying for me."

Betty now entered, and informed Mrs Barton that her cook came to tell her that little Tommy had almost pinched off one of his fingers with the sugar pincers; that one of the girls had burned its arm by falling on the grate; that the alarm had thrown the gout into Mr Barton's stomach, and that the Doctor had been sent for."

"Dear me," said Mrs Barton, "I think my bairns are never out of mischief—Come away, Nancy—farewell, ladies, you may thank your stars that you are not plagued with a sick husband and unruly bairns."

As soon as they were fairly shut out, Miss Kennedy exclaimed, "Did you ever

know such an insufferable fool? Thank our stars that we have not husbands and children! it is a pity that those have both who can manage neither. I dare say Mr Barton won't see her face for another hour; it is a perfect shame for wives to gad about at this rate. Poor Mr Barton is really very much to be pitied: To be sure it is said that his neighbour, Miss Nettles, looks in upon him pretty frequently; but in my opinion, wives should look after their own husbands, for if they don't, others will."

"Indeed," replied Miss Macdonald, "Mrs Barton is a terrible gossip, and very ill-natured; she had the impudence to tell Miss Nettles, that she always knew when Mr Mackinlay was in the village by my visits to his sister; as if I cared for Mr Mackinlay!"

"Ay," said Mrs Smellarat, "she is too fond of tittle-tattle; it is her greatest fault; there is more scandal talked at her tea-table, than in the whole village put together; but speaking of scandal, have you heard that Captain Paul has married his cook?"

"Married his cook! the thing seems out of nature," exclaimed Miss Macdonald.

"Indeed," replied Mrs Smellarat, "it is but too much in nature in these degenerate days. This accounts for his having shied his friends lately. I have known him whisk down a street if he saw me half a mile off. I guessed he was going to do some daft-like thing."

"This affair accounts for what I saw on Sunday last. Do you know, I met his cook dressed in a silk gown, and a Leghorn bonnet, with a long dangling yellow feather: thinks I to myself, your wages never bought that. Do you know if he has left this?"

"Not he," replied Mrs Smellarat; "but when I came past to-day, I noticed that all the blinds were down, which shows he has some sense of shame: he had better leave the village; I'm sure he'll not be much missed, particularly as there are so many new families come to live here, which has raised the price of everything. Mr Jockey-weight has clapped twopence on his beef

this morning.—But, preserve us, Miss Macdonald, is your clock right? it has struck four, and I am engaged to take a family dinner with Miss Tapotow, and I must not keep her waiting. Good morning.—Miss Kennedy, you go my way." And so concluded this long sederunt.

CHAPTER XII.

He that's convinced against his will,
Will be of the same opinion still.
BUTLER.

"I SEE," said Sir Thomas, as they assembled at breakfast, "that my favourite, Miss Noel, sings on Saturday. Mrs Lennox, have you any wish to see our theatre?"

Mrs Lennox, who was always in the humour for gaiety, answered in the affirmative; and it was immediately arranged, that they should drive to town and secure a box.

"We must get some of the officers to escort us," said Ellinor to Catherine, as soon as they got up stairs; "but I hope papa won't plague us with any more ladies.

I hate to go into public with a whole tribe of women. But seriously, we must send a card at least to Spencer and Willoughby, to ask them to accompany us."

"Indeed I would do no such thing," said Catherine; "if you should see any of them before Saturday, you might mention your intention of being at the theatre, and perhaps ask them to go; but I would not pay them the compliment of sending them a card."

"I never heard such folly. Would you have us go to the theatre with nobody but papa and Charles? I would rather stay at home."

"Well, do as you please, Ellinor; only I don't give my vote for asking them. They will think we never can move without having some of them with us; and I confess I should prefer that they joined our party of their own accord; besides, I think we are very well off in having two such good-looking escorts as Sir Thomas and Charles."

"You are an old-fashioned fright, Catherine, and should have been born in the seventeenth century; but if you are contented to have only papa and Charles, 'tis more than I am.—But come," she said, laughing, "I bet you any wager I shall have Mrs Lennox on my side.—Mrs Lennox," she said, approaching her sister-in-law, "Catherine and I have just had a dispute, and, as you are a sensible woman, I come to lay the case before you."

Mrs Lennox smiled at this compliment, and Ellinor proceeded. "She proposes that we shall go to the theatre on Saturday evening with no other attendants than papa and Charles!—Do you patronize this plan? I wished to invite some of our military friends to be of the party, but grim Miss Prudence is quite horrified at the very mention of such a thing; though I am sure I see no impropriety in the matter."

"Nor I neither," said Mrs Lennox; "and as to going with only two gentlemen

'tis not to be thought of; besides, it is quite unfashionable to appear in public with none but your relations. For my part, I don't intend that Charles shall come near me the whole night. So, Ellinor, my dear, do write to Major Willoughby and Captain Spencer. Do you know any more of them? A box looks always well with a good many red-coats in it."

"Now, Catherine," said Ellinor, in great spirits, "you can't object now, for most votes, you know, must carry the day. So do make me a good pen to write these two pretty little notes."

"But," said Catherine, "would it not be better to defer your invitation till the box is secured? We may be disappointed."

"Oh!" said Ellinor, "I don't think there is the slightest chance of our being disappointed in getting a box; the town is not full yet, and, I dare say, we may have half a dozen boxes if we want them. So make haste with my pen, for I am

afraid, if I don't send my card immediately, the gentlemen will be picked up for that night by some pest or other."

Catherine, seeing that all her attempts to prevent Ellinor from writing were unavailing, had just made a pen for her, and was in the act of opening her desk for the paper, when a tremendous peal at the door announced visitors.

"Who the mischief can that be?" said Ellinor, jumping up from her seat. "I never saw it fail, that people bounce in upon one when they are least wanted; and I suppose we have not time to deny ourselves. Torments! I wish they had stayed at home; but I'll decamp to my room, and finish my notes in peace. Catherine, you may come and tell me who it is."

Ellinor had but just quitted the apartment, when Willoughby and Spencer entered. They had scarcely seated themselves, when Catherine said she would inquire if her aunt and cousin were at home, and for that purpose left the room.

"Ellinor," she said, on entering the apartment of the former, "you may stop writing, as both Willoughby and Spencer are in the drawing-room."

"Were they the wretches who rung such a peal at the door? But who is in the drawing-room with these men?"

"I left Mrs Lennox there, and I am now going in search of my aunt."

"Oh, you need not hurry yourself; I dare say Mrs Lennox will have no objections to a little quiet flirtation with Willoughby. I hate your married flirts; indeed I am quite surprised that Charles allows her to go on in the way she does. He, too, who was always so fastidious about the conduct of our sex, and this to be his pattern-wife! Men are certainly capricious monsters. But do give me my pale blue sash from my upper drawer, and then you may go."

Catherine did as she was desired, and then went in search of her ladyship, whom she found too much occupied with house-

hold matters to think of appearing to visitors.

As soon as she entered, Mrs Lennox exclaimed, " I have just told the gentlemen that we are going to the theatre on Saturday night, and as they are to give us the pleasure of their company, Ellinor need not send her cards. You had better tell her this, to prevent her dispatching the notes."

" My cousin is not writing," said Catherine ; " she will be here immediately."

"Not writing !" said Mrs Lennox ; " you surprise me. I am sure she left the room with her writing-desk just a minute before the gentlemen came in ; but perhaps your arguments carried the day at last.—I have half a mind," she said, with coquetry, " to make Major Willoughby umpire in this business : I dare say, Ellinor and I would have him on our side. What say you, Catherine—shall I turn tell-tale ?"

Catherine, who looked embarrassed at this

proposal, pretending not to hear what Mrs Lennox said, turned to Spencer, and observed, "Miss Noel seems a great favourite with the public; and in my opinion, very deservedly so—she has a most enchanting voice."

While Catherine was thus conversing with Spencer, Willoughby, who was dying with curiosity to know of what nature the business was in which he was to be made umpire, and who was only deterred from asking, by the dread of offending Catherine, was so engrossed with his own reflections, that thrice had Mrs Lennox addressed him before she was favoured with a reply; at length the entrance of Ellinor recalled his wandering thoughts, and he entered into conversation with his usual ease and gaiety.

"Now, gentlemen," said Mrs Lennox, gaily, as the carriage drove round, "Off, off, this moment, for we must away and equip for town." And promising to join them at the theatre, they departed.

The ladies drove to town, secured a box, and returned home in great good humour and harmony.

CHAPTER XIII.

A mimic show of what the great world is,
A magic glass, wherein the eye may see
The beings, and the events of many times.

H. G. B.

"CAN'T we manage," said Ellinor, as the cousins were dressing for the theatre, "to prevail with Mrs Lennox to go in the carriage with papa and mamma, and leave you and I to the care of Charles; do you think that plan is feasible? I really hate to go with her. She is so very selfish that she pays no regard to any body's comfort but her own; and then she takes so much room, and crushes one so horribly, that my gown is never fit to be seen when I have the misfortune to sit next her; we must try and go together."

"I don't think you will be able to accomplish that, for depend upon it Mrs Lennox will think she has the best right to the attendance of her husband. But I'll tell you how I think we may manage it; I will go with Sir Thomas and Lady Lennox, and you can go with Charles and his wife."

"Go with Charles and his wife! I would sooner be shot. I hate her, and Charles is never agreeable when in her company; and then they quarrel so constantly and contradict each other so abominably, that really it is vastly disagreeable to a third person, and also vastly impertinent. Married people should reserve their battles for their private hours. I am determined I shan't go with them."

"Well, then, I will go, and you can take my place."

"With papa and mamma! that's just as bad as going with Mrs Lennox. In fact, I hardly know which is worst. No, no, I don't think I can consent to that. Besides,

should they happen to differ upon any point, which you may almost swear will be the case, I have not the knack of warding off disagreeable subjects; they must have you to keep the peace."

"There are but two ways of it, Ellinor, so choose which you like best—I will go with either party."

"I fancy you think with me, that they are both so bad, it matters little to which you give the preference."

"Ellinor, how can you speak so?"

"How can I speak so? you should rather ask, why they *make* me speak so. But do you know if it is settled whether or not Clara is to be of the party? Charles made strong opposition to it in the morning; but I will take any bet, that upon this occasion, as on all others, the lady will carry the point."

"I really do not know, but I think there would be no great harm in taking her; there is nothing I enjoy so much as going with children for the first time to the theatre. I

do like to hear their remarks, and to see them happy."

"You have strange ideas of enjoyment, but there's no accounting for taste; for my part, I would confine the whole infant tribe to the nursery, until they had reached the age of ten or eleven at least; and even then I would only allow them to appear for an hour or two during the day—back they should go to their nursery to have good breeding and quietness whipped into them."

"I am thankful," said Catherine, laughing, "that I am not your child. But hush, I think I heard the carriages coming round."

"Impossible, it cannot be so late. But I won't be long, now that my hair is dressed; but remember, Catherine, you and I are to sit in the back part of the box; we shall, by way of doing her all sort of honour, put Mrs Lennox with the ancients in front."

"You are a sad girl, Ellinor; but it is needless to argue with you, you are quite incorrigible."

The important business of the toilette

being at length concluded, they descended, and had been but a few minutes in the drawing-room, when the carriages were announced, and soon after Mrs Lennox entered, accompanied by Clara, who was dressed for the theatre. Charles no sooner saw by Clara's dress that she was to accompany them, than he exclaimed, "Surely, Mrs Lennox, you don't mean to take that child to the theatre? 'tis most preposterous, and I expressly told you so to-day."

"People will differ," said Mrs Lennox, in a careless tone. "Miss Dundas, may I trouble you for a cup of tea?"

"Mamma, you won't leave me at home," said Clara, clinging to her gown, "I will be very good if you will let me go with you."

"Yes, yes, you may go, child, but don't be troublesome; and go to Jenkinson, and desire her to give you one of my double silk handkerchiefs to wrap round your throat—you don't feel it sore now, love?"

"No, no, mamma, it is quite well," said Clara, as she flew out of the room.

"And has Clara," said Charles, angrily, "got a sore throat, and yet you, her mother, persist in exposing her to the night air?—Anne, how can you be so foolish?"

"You heard her say," said Mrs Lennox, "that her throat was quite well, and I beg, Mr Lennox, you will allow me to manage my own child as I think best."

Charles, seeing that all opposition was vain, wisely allowed the subject to drop; but he was so highly incensed, he determined not to go in the same carriage, and having handed Lady Lennox to the barouche, in he jumped after her, leaving the rest of the party to go in any way they liked.

"Charles," said Lady Lennox, amazed at this unusual want of politeness, "are you not going in your own carriage with Mrs Lennox? Or is she coming with us?"

"I don't care how the devil she goes," said he, carelessly, "but I am going with you."

At this moment, Ellinor, who saw Charles

jump in after her ladyship, determined to follow his example, and running up to the carriage, she said, "You are really ungallant, Charles, not to hand us in—What have you done with your good-breeding? I suppose you think a married man may dispense with it?"

Charles muttered some answer, which Ellinor did not hear very distinctly.

"Where are you all?" said Sir Thomas, when they reached the door; "how are we to divide? Do you go with us, or with Charles and his wife? And Ellinor, where has she gone to now, and what has become of Charles and Lady Lennox? I thought I saw them both go down the stair before me."

Catherine was obliged to say, that they were already off, and requesting Sir Thomas to hand them in, they quickly followed their friends. Lady Lennox's party first reached the Theatre, and on entering, they found both Willoughby and Spencer seated in the back of the box. Charles handed

Lady Lennox to the front row, where he followed her; whilst Ellinor, inwardly rejoicing that her manœuvre had succeeded, seated herself between Spencer and Willoughby; but Willoughby, who had been watching the door of the box in the hope of seeing Catherine enter, now beginning to fear that something had detained her at home, determined to satisfy himself by asking; and turning to Ellinor, he inquired if they were not to have the pleasure of seeing Mrs Lennox and Miss Dundas. Ellinor had but just replied in the affirmative, when the door opened, and they entered.

' Mrs Lennox," said Ellinor, " mamma has kept room for you beside her in the front row, and Clara will see much better there than behind."

But Mrs Lennox, without deigning a reply, very composedly took possession of Willoughby's seat, from which he had risen on their entrance, and so divided him from Ellinor. When the latter saw how things were going, she was in great wrath with

the author of her disappointment. In vain she called to Catherine to come and sit by her: Catherine persisted in going to the front beside Lady Lennox; and Willoughby, after having handed her down, asked if she would make room for him beside her, and without waiting for an answer, seated himself by her side. If Ellinor was angry before, her mortification was increased tenfold, when she contemplated Catherine's agreeable seat; and to conceal her chagrin, she attempted to flirt violently with Spencer; who, having penetrated her manœuvres to attach Willoughby to her side, was too much mortified and grieved, by her levity and caprice, to reply to her badinage, and remained silent and reserved. If Ellinor was mortified, Mrs Lennox was still more so. She had made up her mind to appropriate to herself the attentions of both gentlemen, and great was her disappointment, on finding herself hemmed in between Ellinor and Sir Thomas, both of whom she cordially hated. The case was distressing, and Ellinor,

so far from trying to ameliorate it, took not the slightest notice of her, while Sir Thomas, who was remarkably fond of theatrical amusements, was too much engrossed by the stage to pay her his usual attentions. Bitterly did Mrs Lennox now regret not having gone to the front row; however, she sat the first act out with tolerable composure, and so soon as the curtain dropt, she called to Catherine,—"Do make room for me beside you, Catherine; I wish to hear Clara's remarks on what she has seen."

Catherine immediately said that there was plenty of room; but Willoughby, to whom this proposal was highly displeasing, and who wished to enjoy the conversation of Catherine, took care that she should not divide them; and begging Catherine to move a little nearer, he by this manœuvre placed himself between her and the intruder. This was by no means what Mrs Lennox wished, and, so far was she from listening to the remarks of Clara, which was the ostensible reason for her change of seat, she

desired her not to hold such a chattering, as she had got a most abominable head-ach. Being determined that nothing should please her, she now vented her spite and disappointment in trying to put an end to the happiness of her neighbours, and turning to Catherine, said she felt so much indisposed, that she wished to return home, hoping that Catherine would offer to accompany her. Nor was she wrong in her conjecture. The moment Catherine learned she was unwell, although she felt reluctant to quit the house so soon, and perhaps some regret to be forced to leave Willoughby, she did not for an instant hesitate to go home with her cousin. But Charles prevented her putting this self-denial in practice. Having learned that his lady was indisposed, he said there was no occasion to break up the party, as he would go with her; for he suspected from her looks that it was bad temper, and not illness, which had occasioned the proposal. Meanwhile Lady Lennox insisted on accompanying them; and as Charles thought

his mother would not care to remain much longer, he did not object. In fact, he was glad that she was going with them, as her presence would prevent a matrimonial tête-à-tête, a thing which, in his present temper, he wished rather to avoid; and the trio now quitted the Theatre. Disappointed and enraged at this sudden overturn of her plans, Mrs Lennox was no sooner seated in the carriage, than she gave way to her feelings in violent hysterics; and her ladyship, not accustomed to be with nervous people, greatly alarmed, exclaimed, "I wish we had allowed Catherine to come; she knows how to manage sick people so much better than I do. I really think we must send for her as soon as we reach home."

"Poh!" said Charles, who by this time was pretty well acquainted with the tricks of his lady; "you may make yourself perfectly easy, Mrs Lennox will soon recover; I dare say, all fine ladies take hysterics; they did alarm me at first, but I am accustomed to them now."

"How can you talk so unfeelingly, Charles?" said her ladyship in much displeasure.

Charles, who felt wounded by this remark, said with quickness, "When you, my dear mother, know Mrs Lennox as well as your son does, you will no longer call me unfeeling; and you will also discover that she has those hysterics quite at her command, for the entertainment of her husband."

"Inhuman man!" sobbed the enraged wife; "is this your treatment of me, who brought you such a fortune? But, indeed, I ought to have expected nothing better when I married a Scotch savage:—My poor dear Tracy——!"

"You cannot, madam," said Charles, with warmth, "regret him more than I do."

By this time they had reached Hope Street; and Charles having handed out her ladyship, and strictly charged her not to go near Mrs Lennox, but to send Jenkinson

to her, he stepped again into the carriage and returned to the Theatre.

In fact, Charles knew so much of his wife as to be pretty sure, that the moment he was out of the reach of her voice she would become calm. Nor was he mistaken. Hardly had he quitted the house, than, to the no small surprise of her ladyship, the sobs from the apartment of her daughter-in-law, towards which her anxiety had induced her to approach, became fainter and fainter, till at length they totally ceased, and the first sentence of the invalid rooted her to the spot.

" I wonder," she heard Mrs Lennox say, " what Mr Lennox meant by bringing that prosing mother of his home with us, and what good he thought the old goose could do me? I dare say he made her come just to plague me, knowing I can't endure her, or indeed any of his proud Scotch relations, as I have told him a hundred times. I should like to know for which of my sins I married into this abominable family; and

as to Lennox himself. he has grown quite a bear since he came among them—he is quite changed from the gay young man he was before we were married. Deceitful man! had I known his temper sooner, I never would have been his wife."

On recovering from her surprise at what she had heard, Lady Lennox retraced her steps to the drawing-room, where she sat waiting with the greatest impatience for the return of the party, that she might save herself from exploding, by communicating to the girls the conversation which had passed between Mrs Lennox and her waiting-maid.

Meanwhile Charles, on his return to the Theatre, was assailed by Sir Thomas with innumerable questions as to the state in which he left his lady; and, anxious to get quit of the subject, he stepped down to the front row, and seated himself beside Clara. Taking her upon his knee, he began to chat to her about the play, and thus gave Willoughby, who, he saw, was becoming much

attached to Catherine, an opportunity of improving his acquaintance, which the prattle of the child had somewhat interrupted. Before the after-piece was quite concluded, Catherine proposed that they should leave the house, as they would have less difficulty in getting to the carriage before the crowd began to disperse; which proposal being seconded by Ellinor, the gentlemen agreed to accompany them home to supper.

As soon as they reached Hope Street, Sir Thomas's first question to his lady was, "How is Mrs Lennox? I hope she feels herself better?" But her ladyship was still too much displeased with her daughter-in-law to answer with her usual placidity, and merely said, she really did not well know, as she had not seen her; but she supposed she was better. And as her ladyship recalled what she had overheard, she drew herself up with an air of offended dignity.

"Not seen Mrs Lennox!" exclaimed Sir Thomas, in great surprise; "what is the meaning of this?—Charles," he added,

"have you seen your lady since you came home? Had you not better go and inquire for her?"

But Charles pretended not to hear him, and began to converse with Spencer, while Lady Lennox was describing to Ellinor the impertinence of Mrs Lennox, and Catherine was listening to Willoughby.

The Baronet seeing that Clara seemed the only disengaged person of the party, turned to her, and said, "My dear, go up stairs, and inquire how mamma is,—and don't stay, but return quickly and tell me."

Clara did as she was desired, but had not been gone many minutes when they heard the most tremendous shriek, and the next moment Clara rushed into the room screaming,—"Mamma! mamma!—my nose! my nose!"

"What is the matter, Clara?" said Catherine, snatching her up in her arms.

But Clara's only reply was—"Bad mamma!"

Sir Thomas, who now thought that Clara

was crying because her mamma was ill, turning to Charles, said, "My dear Charles, I fear Mrs Lennox must be very much indisposed; indeed you had better have some advice. Is she subject to those attacks?"

"Oh, very!" said Charles, carelessly; "but we must hear what Clara is crying for."—And approaching her, he asked why she cried, and who had hurt her?

"It was bad mamma that hurt me!" exclaimed the child, between every sob.

"But you should not call her bad mamma," said Catherine, gravely.

"But she *is* bad," said Clara, with violence.

"But, Clara," again said Charles, "why did she hurt you? You must have been naughty?"

"No, me not bad—Grandpapa bid me ask how mamma was, and when me went up to her she gave me a great slap on the face, and asked why me was not in bed, and said, she fancied aunt Catherine was

too busy flirting with Major Willoughby to take care of me."

At this Charles bit his lip, Ellinor gave her head a toss, Willoughby looked grave, but gratified, whilst poor Catherine hardly knew how or where to look. Her first impulse was to run from the room, but her good sense soon whispered her how strange this would appear, and, with a complexion which might have put a rose to the blush, she turned to soothe Clara, pretending not to have heard the last part of her speech.

But Sir Thomas, who would not let the matter rest, returned once more to the charge; and to rid himself of these importunities, Charles said he would go himself, and inquire how his lady found herself. But he went no farther than the staircase, where having stood till a proper time had elapsed for his pretended visit, he returned to the drawing-room, saying, that Mrs Lennox was considerably better, and that, as she thought she would soon drop asleep, she begged none of the family would enter her room

that night. This pacified Sir Thomas, and he sat down to supper with a mind more composed and tranquil.

At supper, Catherine tried to avoid sitting next Willoughby, but her manœuvres proved unsuccessful; for just as she had secured a seat at the bottom of the table, as if by the merest chance in the world, Willoughby dropped into one upon the other side of her, while Catherine, who, after the accusation laid against her, still felt embarrassed in speaking to him, thought every moment an age till he took his departure.

In the meantime, Charles, wishing to relieve her embarrassment, good-naturedly volunteered a song, in which he had made but short progress, when a violent peal was rung from the room above, and in a few moments William entered, with a request from Mrs Lennox, that the party would be less noisy. On this, Charles could not suppress a "Devil take it;" and Willoughby and Spencer, rising immediately, bid the family good night, and quickly took their leave.

" Indeed, Charles," said Sir Thomas, " it was very inconsiderate of you to sing when you knew how much Mrs Lennox was indisposed."

Charles muttered something about not indulging the whims of women, and walked off; while Ellinor, enraged at the sudden breaking up of the party, to show her contempt for Mrs Lennox, hummed a tune the whole way up stairs, her strain increasing in loudness as she passed the chamber of the invalid; and, on entering her own apartment, shut the door with unfeminine violence. Catherine, understanding from Jenkinson that her lady was awake, went in; and going softly up to her, she gently opened the curtain, and hoped she found herself better. But Catherine's kind inquiries met but a scurvy reception; for no sooner did this termagant see who made the inquiry, than she very politely drew the curtain in her face, saying, at the same time, " You must be very anxious, no doubt, to

know how I am, when you could not stop your flirtation with Major Willoughby even to come and ask for me. I must say I am blest with kind relations. And there Miss Ellinor went past my door not a minute ago, singing like a nightingale; a most attentive sister I must say: she might at least have had the good-breeding to come in and ask for me,—it would not have been any very great stretch of politeness, I think."

"But, my dear Mrs Lennox," said Catherine, "we would have been to inquire for you long ere this; but you know you told Charles you did not wish to see any of us to-night, as you thought you would drop asleep."

"I never said any such thing. I wonder how Charles should know that I wished to be quiet, when he has not been near me this whole night. An attentive husband, truly! I lay awake for more than an hour, thinking that surely some of you would come and inquire how I did; but.

oh, no! What signified that I was ill, when there were two gentlemen in the house; and as for Mr Charles saying I was going to drop asleep, I was more likely to drop into a hysteric fit with the noise and hubbub you set up below. And pray who was that roaring fellow, whose voice came up stairs like a post-horn, enough to wake the seven sleepers? It was very thoughtless, and worse than thoughtless, in them to come to supper, when they knew I was unwell, (another tug at the curtain,) and still more unfeeling in Mr Charles to ask them;—at least, I suppose it was him, for I am sure Sir Thomas would have had more sense. And, now I think of it, what has become of her ladyship, that she has not been here? I heard her walking backwards and forwards, but she did not think proper to come farther than the door. You are all alike, I see—a fine family, truly, I have married into."

To Catherine's great relief, the entrance

of Charles put a stop to this harangue, and allowed her to escape to the quiet of her own apartment.

CHAPTER XIV.

Lady Juliana. Here is pretty work, truly; a rich paduasoy, ruff, and fardingale, and never a one to look at them.

Old Play.

The following morning being Sunday, and one of the horses lame, so that they could not get to town, Catherine and Ellinor were dressing to go to the village church, when Jenkinson entered with a message from Mrs Lennox to the former, that she wished to see her immediately.

"I wonder what she can want?" said Ellinor; "do you think she has come to her senses, and wishes to make an apology for her pretty behaviour last night?"

"I should doubt that," replied Catherine; "but we will soon hear; for I shall go down directly."

"Pray," said Mrs Lennox, "what kind of people attend church here? Is it a fashionable congregation?"

Catherine, astonished at the question, answered, that those who lived in P—— would surely attend church, and that if she went she would hear a most excellent sermon.

"You don't suppose that my motive for going there has anything to do with the sermon I may happen to hear? I wish to know if there is any chance of seeing fashionable company there?"

Catherine said the church was generally extremely full, and that there appeared to be a great many fashionable people among them.

"Well, since that is the case, I think I shall go; and as I never was in a Scotch church, it will at least be a novelty to me. But I thought you all belonged to the Episcopal church? at least," she added, "Mr Lennox told me so before I married him."

"And so we do; but when anything

occurs to prevent us from going to Edinburgh, we go to church here; besides, my uncle wishes that we should frequently do so, as by that means we don't require the carriage, and the servants get to church also."

"Good la! is Sir Thomas one of your high-flyers?—Well, I never would have found it out. But if he imagines that I am to walk to church to save my servants trouble, he will find himself very much mistaken. I have no idea of spoiling my domestics in that manner. To church indeed! they are very well off if they get there once a-month. And how can Sir Thomas tell whether they go to church or not?—it is more probable that they spend their time and money at the alehouse; but if I am going to church, I must rise—see what my watch is—and will you be kind enough to ring for Jenkinson?"

"Your watch wants only twenty minutes to eleven; and indeed I fear it is slow."

"Only twenty minutes—and do we go

exactly at eleven ? I fear I shan't have time to dress."

"Had you not better wait till the afternoon," said Catherine, who knew she would not be ready at the hour, and that this would fret both Charles and the Baronet, "and then you won't be hurried ?"

"By no means, I shall probably take an airing then ; so please you, ring for my maid, and don't let me forget to order the carriage."

"As the church is very near this, I think you had better walk ; the people here never think of taking their carriages ; and I fear James will have scarcely time to harness."

"Walk to church ! Indeed I shall do no such thing. What do I care what the people here do ? and certainly, if I have time to dress, Mr James may find time to harness his horses ; so once more, Miss Dundas, I will trouble you to ring for Jenkinson."

When Catherine heard herself address-

ed as Miss Dundas, she thought it high time to decamp; and having rung for Jenkinson, she rejoined her cousin, whom she found standing on the self-same spot where she had left her, to wit, before the looking-glass. "What has kept you?" Ellinor exclaimed: "I thought you were never coming back—and pray what did that amiable sister-in-law of mine want with you?—has she made the *amende honorable?* I am dying to hear what has passed, but I hope you gave her ladyship a good lecture—you might have given a hundred in the time you have stayed; but come, be quick, and let me hear all about it?"

"You are quite mistaken in your conjectures," said Catherine, unable to repress a smile; "Mrs Lennox is going to church; but before venturing, she wished to know whom she would meet there; and I am sure if I had not told her that she would see all the fashionables of the place, she would have remained in bed."

"And much better remain in bed than go

from such a motive; but I dare say she won't go out in the afternoon; indeed she is not so far wrong there, for I think one sermon in a day is quite as much as one can attend to."

"I differ from you decidedly; one day in seven is, in my opinion, little enough to keep such erring mortals in their duty."

"Upon my word, Catherine, you were certainly intended either for a methodist or a missionary. But hush, surely the bells are ringing—oh, yes, and I dare say my amiable sister-in-law is still in her slip; it will cost her half an hour at least to put on her rouge, and there papa is bawling to know if we are all ready."

"How can you speak so of your father?" asked Catherine.

"Does he think we are deaf?" replied Ellinor.

"You had better go then," said the former, "and I will wait for Mrs Lennox—tis needless for us all to be late."

"I suppose I may," rejoined the latter,

"go with the first detachment; 'tis vain to suppose that that dawdle will be in time. But hush, there is Charles and his wife holding a matrimonial dialogue—they might have the discretion to shut their door."

"Suppose we shut ours," added Catherine.

"By no means," jocularly replied her cousin; "rather let us listen to their converse; 'to this complexion we must come at last.'"

"I tell you, Anne," exclaimed Charles, "it is folly in you to suppose you can be in time for church; you are not half dressed yet, and we ought to go instantly—the carriage has been at the door for some time, and now I think of it, you might have walked to church, since all the rest of the family are doing so—Confounded airs!"

"You and your family may walk if you please," replied Mrs Lennox; "but I beg to be excused following their whims.—Jenkinson, give me a pocket-handkerchief."

"Mamma, mamma," exclaimed Clara,

bursting into the room, " where are you going? take me with you."

" You can't go, child, you are not dressed."

" I think," said Charles, as he flung himself out of the room, " to complete the absurdity of the affair, you had better wait till Clara too is dressed, and then you will be in excellent time for the afternoon's service."

" Ellinor, Catherine, do you mean to go to church to-day?" cried the Baronet, " I won't wait another instant."

" Did you ever hear such a riot?" said Ellinor; " a pretty Sunday morning, truly."

" Do, my dear cousin, let me persuade you to go down; it is wrong needlessly to irritate Sir Thomas."

Thus admonished, Ellinor went down stairs, and in a few moments Catherine had the pleasure of seeing her leave the house, accompanied by Sir Thomas, Lady Lennox, and Charles.

Catherine next attempted to hasten the movements of Mrs Lennox; but this lady was so long of deciding which of her gay Cheltenham dresses would most astonish the natives, that it was past twelve o'clock before her dashing equipage rattled down the street, and stopped at the door of the church. But, to Catherine's delight, who was shocked at the idea of disturbing the service by their entrée, the door was closed—not a pew-opener was to be seen—and Mrs Lennox, in high indignation at being thus compelled "to waste her sweetness on the desert air," returned in extreme displeasure to Hope Street.

"Oh," said Ellinor, as soon as she returned, "you can't think how much I rejoiced at the discomfiture of our amiable friend. I heard the carriage drive up about twelve o'clock, and then move off in a few minutes; I was so busy picturing to myself her rage and mortification, that I did not hear one word in ten of the sermon."

" You censured lately," replied Catherine, " Mrs Lennox's motives for going to church—are you sure that you employed your own thoughts any better than she would have done?"

" Come now, don't be so precise; let us go down to the sands, and see if there are any people worth looking at."

To the sands they went, but they had walked only a short time when the church bell began to sound.

" Do you mean to go back to church?" asked Catherine.

" Not I, truly; I hope you don't intend to go? A walk will do you more good than fifty sermons."

" I propose to have both," replied Catherine; " first to church, and then a walk before going home to dinner."

" You are a puritanical, disagreeable creature; your sermons seem to teach you only how to disappoint and plague your friends."

"Perhaps," said Catherine, as she turned to leave her, "they may teach me to bear with them."

CHAPTER XV.

Delicious is the subtile concert of the slender reed in relating secrets; and love, and musk cannot remain long concealed.

Tales of a Parrot.

When Ellinor was left alone, she began to debate with herself whether to prolong her walk or go home. "I wonder," she said, mentally, "if any of these wretches will be down to-day; they ought, I think, were it only to inquire for Mrs Lennox, though my own private opinion is, they don't care three straws about her; indeed I don't know who does. But I may as well take another turn, in case they should appear. How provoking should they be all sitting in Hope Street. I can't think that either, for I know both papa and Charles are out,

unless, indeed, Mrs Lennox chooses to quit her apartment, which she would soon do were they to call. But I think I see three figures coming down; I am certain the one in the middle is Willoughby—'tis a mercy I waited."—And she put up her veil.

Ellinor was right: Willoughby, Spencer, and Ashley, soon joined her.

"I hope," said the former, "that Miss Lennox is well?—We called just now to inquire for Mrs Lennox, and are happy to learn that she is convalescent this morning."

"Yes," said Ellinor, "she is quite well to-day; indeed, I don't think there was much the matter with her: all fine ladies, I am told, are subject to vapours; and who so fine as Mrs Lennox?—but would they not admit you?"

"Oh," said Spencer, "we left our cards. The servant told us that both the ladies and gentlemen of the family were out."

"But I suspect," added Willoughby.

laughing, "our friend William was not exactly speaking the truth; for I am pretty certain Miss Dundas was at home, though she would not allow us to enter. She was with Mrs Lennox, I suppose?"

"Indeed she is no such thing; she happens to be at church. I did all in my power to prevent her from going, but go she would go, in spite of me."

"It would be happy for us," said Willoughby, "if we followed her bright example."

Ellinor bit her lip, and to hide her chagrin, turned to Ashley, saying, "What became of you at the Theatre last night? You would have been much pleased had you been there. I never heard Miss Noel in better voice."

Ashley regretted that a very particular engagement detained him at home.

Spencer having determined not to commit himself further with Ellinor, until he closely investigated her character and disposition, now acted rather on the reserve;

but Ashley made ample amends for his taciturnity, by keeping up a running fire of small talk.

" I thought," said Willoughby, " that the service was shorter in the afternoon than in the forenoon ; but I fancy I am mistaken —It must be very late. Pray, Ashley, what is your watch? mine is slow—only half-past three."

" Then it is just twenty minutes too fast," replied Ashley, whose hearty laugh threw Willoughby into some confusion.

Just at this moment, Clara, who was walking with her maid upon the sands, came running up to them,—

" Where is aunt Catherine ?" she asked.

" I am sure, Clara," said Ellinor, " I have told you a hundred times that Catherine is not your aunt; 'tis strange you will persist in calling her so."

" But I say she is my aunt, and I don't mind you, for mamma says you never tell me what is true. Major Willoughby, is

not aunt Catherine my own aunt Catherine?"

"What a spoiled brat that is!" said Ellinor, as she passed on with Spencer and Ashley; "what with my sister-in-law and cousin, she stands a great chance of being ruined."

Not so thought Willoughby. He had remarked the evident improvement Clara had made under the tuition of Catherine, and perhaps he did not love the little girl the less for being a favourite with the latter. He called Clara to him; and as he had dropped behind the others, he entered into conversation with her.

"But tell me," said Clara, who was quite proud of being noticed, "is not aunt Catherine my own aunt?"

"No," said the Major, "she is not your aunt."

"Why, then, is aunt Ellinor my aunt? I don't love her half so well as aunt Catherine; she is always teasing me, and is so cross, and never plays with me, and says I

am so troublesome, and is always telling mamma to send me to the nursery. Do you love aunt Ellinor better than aunt Catherine?"

"I thought I told you," said Willoughby, parrying this home-thrust, "that Miss Dundas is not your aunt?"

"Well, but I will ask aunt Catherine myself; for she never tells me stories like aunt Ellinor; but where is she?"

"She has gone to church."

"Will she be long of coming home? I wish she would come home."

"No, I don't think she will be long now."

"You must go home, Miss Clara," said her maid, approaching. "I must change your frock before dinner; and you know your mamma said you were not to stay long on the sands, as she was afraid of your throat; so come away home, like a good little girl."

But Clara was not to be so coaxed; she grasped Willoughby's hand, at the same

time exclaiming, " I won't go home; I am waiting for aunt Catherine, and will come home with her; my throat is quite well, and my frock is quite clean; and you may go home, and tell mamma that Major Willoughby will take care of me till aunt Catherine comes from church."

In vain the servant insisted that she should be obeyed, and told her that Miss Dundas would not come home by the sands. Clara was obstinate; and, as her mamma had turned off three servants for daring to thwart her darling, Clara knew she could be positive with impunity.

At length, Willoughby having told the nursery-maid that he would take charge of her, and that if they did not meet Miss Dundas, he would bring her safe home, she departed, leaving the Major and his young companion to pursue their walk and their conversation, which they did not fail to do as soon as she quitted them.

" Are you going to marry aunt Cathe-

rine?" asked Clara, to the surprise of Willoughby.

"Who told you that?"

"I heard Jenkinson say to mamma, that William had told her he was sure you were going to marry her."

"And what did your mamma say?"

"She said, no; for that it was aunt Ellinor you were going to marry; but I know she does not love aunt Catherine as I do. Don't you love her too?"

The Major did not find it convenient to give a direct answer to Clara's question; but as he was getting interested in her prattle, he determined to encourage it; and dropping still farther behind Ellinor and her companions, he again commenced, "Did aunt Catherine hear your mamma say I was going to marry her?"

"Oh, no; she was not in the room. It was when mamma was dressing. But are you really going to be married to her? and will you be my uncle then?"

"No, no," said Willoughby, laughing,

"you know Miss Dundas is not your aunt."

"Well, then, when will you marry her? Do you know, I was at mamma's marriage, and got a great piece of plum-cake and a pair of new white gloves; if you will go home with me I will show them to you; mamma has them locked up for me. And my new papa, for Jenkinson says he's not my own papa, gave me such a pretty locket, and a long, long, long gold chain. I will let you see it too. I had it on the night mamma took me to the play. Will you give me plum-cake and a locket when you marry aunt Catherine?"

"Oh, yes," said Willoughby; "when I marry aunt Catherine you shall have a whole plum-cake to yourself, and a locket, and a pair of white gloves too."

"I shall have two lockets, two gold chains, two pair of white gloves, and a whole plum-cake all to myself!" exclaimed the delighted Clara, jumping on the sands;

"but when shall I have them?—Next week?"

"Oh, no, not quite so soon; but you know our agreement was when I married aunt Catherine."

"Well, but won't you marry her?"

"Perhaps," said Willoughby, "aunt Catherine won't marry me."

"But I shall ask her, and shall promise to be a good, a very good child, if she will do so.—But yonder she is," she exclaimed, bursting from Willoughby, "and I must run and tell her what you have promised to give me." And away she flew.

Willoughby, taken by surprise, for some minutes remained irresolute how to act. Not to join Catherine, he thought, would appear strange; and yet he feared, if he joined them, that Clara's remarks would place Miss Dundas in a most awkward situation. But Willoughby had now no alternative, as Catherine and her companion were within a few yards of him.

"I told you it was aunt Catherine," said

the latter, as she approached; "I knew her by her shawl."

Willoughby bowed to Catherine with considerable confusion; but it was returned with so much frankness, that he began to hope Clara had not put her threat in execution. So far he was right. Clara had only told Catherine all the fine things the Major was to give her, but had omitted to mention the occasion of the gifts; and Catherine, by way of entering into conversation, began by saying, "What fine things are these Clara tells me you have promised her—gold chains, lockets, gloves, and plum-cakes? Why, Clara, I fear Major Willoughby will spoil you."

"No, no," said Clara, "he wont spoil me; but he is not to give them to me till he marries you. When will you marry him, aunt? I want my gloves and gold chain, so do marry him soon."

During this speech Catherine blushed deeply; but after a few moments she broke silence. "Clara," she said, with as much

composure as she could assume, "don't talk nonsense; you know I don't love little girls who tell stories, and I don't believe that Major Willoughby promised you any of those articles you were telling me of just now."

"But I don't tell stories, and he did promise me," said Clara, beginning to cry. "Jenkinson told mamma you were going to marry Major Willoughby, and he said he would give me all those pretty things if you would marry him.—Did you not, Major Willoughby?"

Willoughby, now finding himself called upon to speak, was devising how best to explain the awkward affair, when, to his inexpressible relief, they were joined by Ellinor and her two companions.

"What is the matter with you, Clara?" said Ellinor, on observing that she was crying.

"Because," answered the child, "aunt Catherine says I tell stories."

"Is that all?" said Ellinor; "I thought

she had whipped you, from that rueful countenance of yours; but come," she said, addressing Catherine, " let us have another turn on the sands before we go home."

But Catherine was too much afraid of the remarks of Clara to risk their recurrence; and, turning to Ellinor, she said, " I fear I must leave you, as I have got a little of a headach. But don't let me interrupt your walk, I shall take Clara home with me." And making a slight bow to the whole party, she turned, and left them.

Willoughby, who would have given worlds to have been her companion, but hesitated from the fear of annoying her, at last stepped forward, and said, he hoped Miss Dundas would allow him to have the honour of seeing her home, which Catherine pretending not to hear, called to Clara, " Come away, come away; mamma will think you are drowned in the sea."

Suspecting that Catherine heard his request, Willoughby was still standing irresolute, whether or not he should follow, when

Ashley quitted his party, and joined her; while Catherine, whose heart beat quick on hearing steps behind her, lest it should be Willoughby, was partly relieved, and partly disappointed, when Ashley's voice saluted her ear.

"Why, Miss Dundas," he said on joining her, "I must confess, you walk at a pretty round pace; you must not pretend to be a fine lady with such a step as that; it was all I could do to reach you, though you were but a few paces in advance of me."

"I was always a very quick walker," replied she with a smile; "indeed, most unfashionably so; my cousin frequently complains of me. But if I can't be stamped fashionable until I learn to drag one limb after another, at the rate of a quarter of a mile in the hour, I must be contented to remain unfashionable as long as I live."

From this they got into a discussion on the elegant walk of the Spanish ladies; on which subject we must confess Catherine did not hear above half what her companion

said, and her replies were sometimes not quite to the purpose; nor was she sorry when they reached home, where having wished Ashley good morning, and bestowed on him one of her most captivating smiles, as an atonement, perhaps, for the wandering of her thoughts, she retired to her own apartment, there to reflect upon the strange, and to her unaccountable, remarks of the little Clara.

CHAPTER XVI.

Now shall ye hear how these delights, so pure,
Changed all to trouble and discomfiture.

The Lay of Sir Lanval.

When Mrs Lennox and Catherine were sitting together in the evening, Clara, running up to the latter, said, " Do, aunt Catherine, come and play me a tune."

" Play upon a Sunday, Clara ?—No, no, but I shall play to you to-morrow."

" But why," asked Clara, as she seated herself beside Catherine,—" why won't you play on Sunday, when mamma plays to me ? is she naughty ?"

This was rather a puzzling question, but Catherine replied to it the best way she could.

" You must never call mamma naughty ; it is the custom in your country to have music on Sunday, though not in mine. But if you will promise to be a very good child, and sit very quiet, I shall finish the pretty story I was telling you about Joseph and his Brethren."

" Oh, yes, tell me that story ; you know you left off where his bad brothers put him in the pit,—is it a true story ?"

" Quite true, and when you are older you shall read it yourself."

" But when shall I be big enough to read it ? I only know six letters, and it will be a long, long time before I can read about Joseph, won't it ?"

" No, if you are a very diligent little girl, you may read it very soon."

" But where shall I read it ?"

" In the Bible."

" Has my mamma a Bible ? Does she read it ? and does she know all about Joseph ?"

" I dare say she does,—but if you talk so much, I can't tell the story."

" Well, but I won't talk any more, after I have asked mamma if she can tell me all about Joseph."

And away she ran across the room to Mrs Lennox, who was lolling on a sofa. " Mamma, can you tell me the story about Joseph and his Brethren ?"

But Mrs Lennox did not deign to give the child a reply.

" I say, mamma," again said Clara, at the same time trying to climb on the sofa, " can you tell me about Joseph and his brethren ?"

" Get along, child," said Mrs Lennox, " and don't tease me—don't you see I am reading ?"

" Are you reading about Joseph ?" said the indefatigable Clara, who had now got beside her mother, and was trying to peep at the Morning Post, which she imagined was her favourite story.

" Get down, you little urchin," exclaim-

ed Mrs Lennox, at the same time giving her a hearty slap; "do you wish to break your neck? Come down off the sofa immediately, and be quiet, and don't plague me, or I shall send you to the nursery."

"Well, then," said Clara, as she descended from the sofa, "you are an old cross mamma, and I don't love you half so well as aunt Catherine. I wish she was my mamma in place of you."

"You little impertinent minx!" exclaimed Mrs Lennox, starting up from her recumbent position, and giving Clara a box on the ear, just as she reached the ground, "I will teach you to talk so to your mamma,—are these the lessons Miss Dundas gives you?"

Catherine had just begun a spirited justification, when her voice was drowned by the cries of Clara; and by the time the child had ceased to scream and sob, Catherine had recollected how much it would pain Charles, were he to know the improper conduct of his wife; she therefore resolved

to refrain from noticing Mrs Lennox's unjust charge, and to keep silence on the subject. Being desirous of avoiding farther discussion with Mrs Lennox, she rose; and Clara, seeing her about to leave the room, renewed her cries and screams, and insisted that Catherine should remain, or allow her to go with her; but Catherine, who saw that Mrs Lennox was jealous of her influence over the child, would do neither, and, in spite of the tears and entreaties of Clara, withdrew to her apartment. On her disappearance, Clara sent forth the most violent outcries; in vain did Mrs Lennox promise alternately to give her a whipping or a wax-doll, she would not be pacified; and annoyed by the uproar, and anxious to return to the sofa and the Morning Post, she rung for Jenkinson, and desired her to carry her compliments to Miss Dundas, and her request that she would assist her in quieting Clara.

To this Catherine replied, " that she was sorry she could not comply with her wishes."

Clara, who had ceased screaming till she heard Catherine's answer, now began again with increased fervour, and Mrs Lennox, heartily tired of the task of managing her own child, in utter despair hastened to Catherine, and making an ample apology for her conduct, easily persuaded her to return with her to the drawing-room.

"Here is aunt Catherine," said Mrs Lennox, "come to tell you all about Joseph and his brethren."

"Indeed, I shall do no such thing," replied Catherine—"she does not deserve it."

"For heaven's sake, do promise to humour her," exclaimed Mrs Lennox, terrified at the prospect of another fit of crying; but Catherine was firm, and lifting Clara from the carpet, she in a short time restored quietness without calling in the aid of either whipping or the doll; and the now penitent child was sent off to bed, without having heard the much-longed-for story of Joseph and his brethren.

Surprised at Ellinor's absence, Catherine went in search of her, and found her in bed, just awakened from a very comfortable nap, in which she had been indulging. "Are you not ashamed, Ellinor, of spending your Sundays in this manner?"

"Not in the least," she replied, with a yawn; "I felt horridly sleepy after dinner, and thought I might as well come to bed as sit yawning in the drawing-room till tea was ready. But either I was dreaming, or there was an unusual noise below. I actually imagined I heard Clara screaming like a fury: was it so, or did I dream it?"

"You must have slept sound indeed, if you have any doubt upon the subject."

"Then there was an uproar?—Now, do tell me all about it, for I am dying with curiosity to hear what occasioned the rumpus."

"Come, Ellinor, get up. Do you know it is almost nine o'clock? and I expect every moment to be called down to read a sermon."

"I am so tired, I have half a mind to slip it to-night. But, at any rate, I shan't budge till you tell me what made Clara squall so hideously."

At this moment Catherine heard some one calling her, and she opened the door.

"Catherine," again called Charles, for it was he—"are you coming down to read? It is almost nine o'clock—my father seems impatient."

"I will be down in a minute," said Catherine, as she returned to the room to tell Ellinor.

"If you are coming," she said, "let it be directly; for you know Sir Thomas does not approve of any one entering in the middle of the sermon."

"I suppose I must," said Ellinor, as she rose to look for her shoes.

On entering the drawing-room, Catherine found Mrs Lennox still reclining on the sofa, and Sir Thomas walking through the room, while Charles and Lady Lennox were looking out at the window.

"You are late to-night," said the Baronet. "Where is Ellinor?"

"She will be here immediately;" and Catherine approached the table where the books lay. She put off as much time as possible in fixing what sermon to read, that Ellinor might be in the room before she commenced; and just as she thought she could wait no longer, the latter entered.

By the time Catherine had finished a few pages, Mrs Lennox fell fast asleep, and her breathing became so loud, that it reached the ears of Charles, who, giving his lady a gentle shake, said, "Anne, you are sleeping."

"Sleeping!" said the indignant lady, awakening from a most comfortable nap; "I never was more awake in my life: what can make you suppose that I was sleeping?"

"A very natural supposition, I think, when I heard you snoring. People seldom snore when they are awake."

"I never snore, sir, at any time, whe-

ther asleep or awake; and you know that very well, though you say so, just to tease me."

"I don't see how you can tell whether or not you snore. Those who hear you are the best judges; and it is a fact, that the noise you made quite drowned the sermon."

"Catherine, my dear," said Sir Thomas, "go on."

Catherine obeyed, Charles resumed his seat near the window, and Mrs Lennox threw herself back on the sofa, with high indignation at being accused of the vulgar crime of snoring. As soon as the sermon was finished, the supper-tray was ordered in, and having partaken of a slight repast, the party separated; which terminated Mrs Lennox's first Sunday in Scotland.

CHAPTER XVII.

As letters some hand hath invisibly traced,
When held to the flame will steal on the sight,
So many a feeling that long seem'd effaced,
The warmth of a meeting like this brings to light.
MOORE.

As Willoughby was returning to the Barracks from Edinburgh one day, a gentleman on horseback passed him quickly, but who, on glancing at Willoughby, suddenly checked his steed, saying at the same time, "I thought I was right;" and, springing from his horse, he advanced to Willoughby, holding out his hand.

"My dear Sefton," exclaimed Willoughby, "where, in the name of wonder, have you dropped from? This is really an unexpected pleasure. Pray, what has brought

you to Scotland? and where were you going just now?"

"To see you, to be sure. I mean to dine with you to-day, and you will not get quit of me in a hurry; for I have a multitude of questions to ask, and I suppose I shall have not a few to answer."

"You may depend upon that; but desire your servant to go on with the horses, we shall proceed at our leisure."

Sefton gave the necessary directions, and arm-in-arm the friends proceeded to the Barracks.

The presence of the servants during dinner prevented any interesting conversation between the friends; but as soon as they and their paraphernalia were withdrawn, Sefton began: "So you have left the **th regiment? What a wild set we were! I have often wondered, Willoughby, how you contrived to keep out of our frolics, and yet to be such a favourite with us all. Major Fanshaw was your stanch friend."

"Poor Fanshaw!" said Willoughby.

"What!" exclaimed Sefton, "is he dead? I never heard of it."

"Yes, Sefton," replied Willoughby, "he died in my arms."

"Poor Fanshaw!" repeated Sefton, "and Wilmot, too, is dead?"

"Yes, he too is gone to his account!" replied Willoughby, while a sudden shudder came over him.

"I am not surprised to hear of his death," cried Sefton; "I always said he would go off in a fit some day or other. Between ourselves, Willoughby, he was much to blame for encouraging the dissipation that went on among the juniors—he certainly ought to have checked it; but, indeed, he could not have done so without making a great change in his own conduct. Was there not," continued Sefton, "some strange story about his death?"

"There was," answered Willoughby, "something so shocking in the manner of his death, that I feel great dislike to recall the circumstances of it; but, if you wish it,

I will vanquish my repugnance, and briefly relate the story. A short time after you left the regiment, Colonel Wilmot became dreadfully irritable, and subject to frequent bursts of passion. He sat late, more, apparently, for the purpose of drowning thought, than from any pleasure he had in intemperance. It was well known," continued Willoughby, "that Wilmot had induced a lovely young creature to leave her friends, and place herself under his protection. It was rumoured, that unable to bear her degradation, she had bitterly reproached him and fled, and that no trace of her had ever been discovered. Certain it is that she was no longer with him. About three weeks after her disappearance, one day during dinner Wilmot seemed to be in a very moody humour; almost savage with every one around him. In particular, he appeared to take pleasure in contradicting everything I said, and evidently wished to draw me into a dispute. Seeing this, I was on my guard;

but in the course of conversation I happened to mention the word 'conscience.'

"Conscience!" exclaimed Wilmot with a sneer, "a bugbear to frighten women and children."

"And men also," replied I coolly.

"What do you mean by the allusion?" said Wilmot, fiercely.

"I mean simply," replied I, "that I *believe* I have a conscience, and so has every man; and however desirous we may be to stifle its voice, it will at times speak loudly."

"Ha, ha, ha! why, then, I suppose you say your prayers, read your Bible, and believe in a future state of rewards and punishments?" said Wilmot, affecting great gaiety.

"You are perfectly right in all these conjectures," I replied calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha! do you hear him, Fanshaw?" exclaimed Wilmot; "but you and I know better."

"Colonel Wilmot," replied Fanshaw,

"this conversation is disagreeable to me—it has been carried too far. Whatever may be our private sentiments, let us not deprive others of their belief."

"Nay, never wince, man," replied Wilmot, "but boldly declare your sentiments, as I do. Since, however, you seem to have some doubts on the subject, I promise you solemnly, that if I die before you, I will return to tell you how it fares with me in the other world, provided there is one; and may the devil take me if I don't keep my word!"

"Scarcely were these words uttered, when he started suddenly—his eyes seemed to follow some object invisible to all but him: he sprung distractedly from his seat, and fell back a lifeless corpse! You can have no idea, my dear Sefton, of the impression made on us all by this dreadful event. Even the most unthinking were appalled. Fanshaw's agitation was not to be concealed. You are aware, perhaps, that his opinions on these subjects were very unsettled. He fancied

himself an unbeliever; but his dislike to hear religion ridiculed, his uneasiness when such topics were alluded to, all proved that he was not hardened in impiety, and that he might yet be reclaimed. So soon as it was ascertained that the unhappy Wilmot was no more, we all retired; and next day, while yet in my apartment, Fanshaw's servant came, to say his master wished to see me. I went to his room, and found him pale and languid. He evidently had not been in bed all night.

"Willoughby," said he, "this is an awful event. Heaven grant it may make a salutary impression on us all. The bare recollection of it makes my blood run cold. I have never yet met with anything which has so unhinged me."

"Major Fanshaw," replied I, "I sincerely hope that the scene we witnessed last night may make a deep and lasting impression. It is indeed a fearful warning. It is horrible to think he has been snatched away

at such a moment. Something certainly weighed heavily on his mind."

"That," replied Fanshaw, "is entirely my opinion. He has never been himself since the flight of that unhappy young creature. The uncertainty he was in regarding her fate, rendered him irritable, and at times almost frantic."

"I remained a considerable time with Fanshaw, and at length had the pleasure of seeing him become more composed.

"A few weeks passed away, and the late shocking event appeared to be almost forgotten by all but Fanshaw, who shunned the company of the officers, and devoted himself to reading and solitary walks.

"One evening Captain Riddel said, jestingly, "Colonel Wilmot is not a man of his word—he has not come back, as he promised, to pay his respects to the Major; although, if one were to judge from the Major's devout look, one would suppose the interview had already taken place."

"I replied to him coldly enough, for this

I thought was a subject very unfit for jesting upon; and, as it was late, I retired to my room. Not feeling inclined to sleep, I took up a book, and read for a considerable time. By degrees all noise ceased. It was past midnight, and every one had retired to rest. I had just laid aside my book, with the intention of doing so also, when I was electrified by hearing a groan, or rather agonized cry, proceed from the apartment of Fanshaw. Believing that he was suddenly taken ill, I seized my light, and hurried to his room. The door was fastened; but exerting all my strength, I burst it open, and entering, found Fanshaw extended across his bed. Apparently he had been attempting to rise, and had fallen in the effort. He was perfectly insensible. Alarmed at his situation, I quickly summoned assistance, and in a few minutes the Doctor was at his bed-side; and on seeing him, instantly decided on opening a vein. We bared his arm for that purpose—our efforts seemed to rouse him to recollection—and darting

from us with frantic gestures, and uttering the most agonizing exclamations, he resisted all our endeavours. A momentary glimpse of reason again seemed to come over him, and staring on me wildly, he exclaimed, " Don't leave me, Willoughby, I entreat you; Wilmot has been here, and wrung my hand at parting with a grasp of fire. He will return presently, and I dare not look upon him."

" Beston and I gazed at each other.

" My dear sir," said Beston, " we will discuss these matters some other time. It is necessary at present that you should lose a little blood. You will be better to-morrow, and we shall then investigate the cause of this attack."

" Fanshaw smiled faintly, but without speaking; and Beston having bled him freely, proposed sitting up with him; but as he seemed to prefer my society alone, I sat down by his bed-side, and Beston soon after left us.

"Willoughby!" exclaimed Fanshaw, as soon as we were alone, "he has been here!"

"My dear friend," I replied, "you must not agitate yourself. I entreat you to refrain from speaking on this subject."

"You are wrong, Willoughby," he answered, "it will rather relieve me to open my heart to you, from whom I fear neither scoffs nor ridicule. As sure as there is a Heaven above us, Wilmot was here this night, sent, I trust, in mercy. Pray with me, Willoughby, that our latter end may not resemble his!"

"I did as he requested; and after the performance of this duty he became more composed.

"Who was first in my room?" he asked.

"I told him that I was, and described the situation in which I found him.

"I recollect," he replied, "that after the terrible apparition was gone, I attempted to rise with the intention of rushing from the room; but overcome with horror, I lost my senses, and fell back on the bed."

"Are you sure," asked I, "that there has been no illusion? Is it not possible that the scene may have been acted by some one of our giddy youth?"

"No," replied Fanshaw, "it was Wilmot himself; I had always a dread and presentiment that he would appear. Listen to me, Willoughby, while I am yet able to give a distinct account of this awful visitation. I went late to bed, but though fatigued, I could not sleep. I felt an oppression at my heart, for which I was unable to account; I breathed with difficulty, and sighed heavily. The sigh was echoed. Startled at this, I called out suddenly, 'Who is there?' 'Wilmot!' replied a voice, whose tones yet sound in my ears. 'Fanshaw,' continued he, 'surely there is a place of punishment for the wicked! Avoid my dreadful fate! I impiously dared to doubt, and sinned against the light of conscience.'

"The blood," continued Fanshaw, "curdled in my veins; but although the words

fell on my ear, the thing seemed so incredible, I suddenly exclaimed, It is all delusion."

' Fanshaw,' said he, mournfully, ' and is it even so ! Yet reach me your hand, and look upon me ere you disbelieve my words ;' I turned towards the speaker, and mechanically stretched out my arm—the semblance of Wilmot stood before me, and my hand was seized by one of burning fire !"

" This," said Sefton, " is the most extraordinary affair I ever heard ; one hardly knows what to think of it."

" The impression it made upon Fanshaw," replied Willoughby, " was never effaced ; he became an altered man in every respect, and was ever after assiduous in the highest degree to check, in all the officers of the regiment, every species of irregularity and dissipation."

" That would be no easy task," remarked Sefton.

" It was, indeed, an arduous undertaking," replied Willoughby, " and Fanshaw

suffered much from the unfeeling allusions which were sometimes made to himself."

"Why," replied Sefton, trying to dissipate the increasing melancholy of Willoughby, "this, I suppose, accounts for your serious air? until I heard this marvellous story, I thought, from your disconsolate appearance, that you must either be in love or in debt."

"And now tell me, Sefton," said Willoughby, "what has brought you to Scotland?"

"Just, my dear friend," replied Sefton, "that which carries many a man out of his way—a woman. Mrs Sefton insisted on coming down to pay a visit to a very old and dear friend, whom I now esteem, but at one time hated most cordially. Perhaps you are not aware that my Ellen's father would not consent to our marriage, because he disliked my profession; and as I was then too poor to quit it, what was to be done? I hinted at a private marriage; a proposal which Ellen instantly rejected;

but too much in love to be easily repulsed, I returned to the charge, and assailing her with entreaties, reproaches, and with all the vehement eloquence of a lover, I flattered myself her resolution was giving way, when, behold, she suddenly changed her mind, positively rejected my proposal, and forbid me ever to mention the subject again. Stung to the quick by this disappointment, I gave the reins to my passion—reproached her bitterly with indifference—and, in short, acted so many extravagancies, that poor Ellen burst into tears.

" 'Harry,' said she, 'our parting will be sufficiently trying to us both, (at that time our regiment was changing quarters,) without the additional misery of parting in anger. Here,' said she, putting a letter into my hand; 'here are to be found the reasons for my determination, never to be yours without my father's consent.'

"I tore open the letter; it was from the friend whom we are now come to visit, and to whom Ellen had confided my proposal

of a private marriage, entreating her advice. This meddling prude, as I then thought her, in the most beautiful and affectionate language imaginable, conjured Ellen never for a moment to think of taking a step of such importance without the consent of her father, and set forth the duty she owed him in such a striking point of view, as completely fixed her wavering resolution, and of course she decided against me.

"And so, said I, gloomily, you value the good opinion of this girl more than my love?"

"'Sefton,' replied Ellen, 'you wrong me, but let us part in peace.' She held out her hand, but I caught her in my arms, and besought her to pardon my impetuous temper. We parted good friends, and looked forward to happier days; and you see, Willoughby, all is ordered for the best. We have come together at last, and with the entire approbation of my father-in-law, who, upon my unexpectedly succeeding to the estate of a distant relation, which

enabled me to leave the army, no longer withheld his consent. Willoughby, you must marry. Come and witness my happiness, my dear friend, and then, I think, you won't require much persuasion."

"It gives me pleasure," said Willoughby, with warmth, "to see you so happy; but though you, my friend, have been so fortunate as to draw a prize in the matrimonial lottery, every one may not have your good fortune. You know that there are at least ten blanks to one prize."

"Poh," said Sefton, "all nonsense; there are thousands of amiable women in the world, would you but take the trouble of looking for them."

"Well, well," said Willoughby gaily, "I shall be content for the present to be introduced to one of the thousand, whom I have some curiosity to see."

"I expect you are to adore her," said Sefton laughing; "but I must be off," he added, as he rose to depart, "she will wonder what has detained me."

"What, Sefton," said Willoughby smiling, "under petticoat government already, and yet you wish to get me into the noose?"

"I wish to Heaven, Willoughby, you were in it to-morrow," said Sefton; and the friends separated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

What is there in the vale of life
Half so delightful as a wife,
When friendship, love, and peace combine
To stamp the marriage bond divine?

COWPER.

"CATHERINE," said Ellinor, "come here to the window, and tell whose servant this is with a cockade in his hat. It is neither Willoughby's nor Spencer's."

"I am as much in the dark as yourself," said Catherine, quietly reseating herself.

William now entered with a card, which Ellinor advanced to receive. But he presented it to Catherine, saying, "For Miss Dundas, ma'am."

Ellinor, with a scrutinizing air, examined

Catherine's face, which beamed with pleasure.

"There seems to be some mighty pleasant communication contained in it," said Ellinor, "at least if one may judge from your looks."

"I am the happiest creature in the world," said Catherine; "but I must write an answer, for the servant waits."

"Is it a secret?" asked Ellinor, with a dissatisfied air.

"Not at all," replied Catherine; "'tis from my dear friend, Ellen Sefton, who has come to Scotland solely for the purpose of seeing me; and, as she feels fatigued with her journey, she wishes me to come and spend the day with her."

"Of course you will decline; you know we are going out to dinner."

"I must for once be rude, and send an apology; I cannot deny myself the pleasure of seeing my excellent Ellen."

"Now, oblige me, Catherine," said Elli-

nor, " and put off your visit till to-morrow."

" Indeed, I cannot do it. What would Ellen think of me, after coming so far for my sake ?"

" As to that," said Ellinor, " 'tis probably words of course. Very likely she was coming down to Scotland at any rate, and thought she might as well pay you the compliment of saying so."

" Ellen Sefton," said Catherine, " is above saying what is not the case."

" There is no occasion," replied Ellinor, " to be in a passion about it; but I might have known my wishes would have little effect, when put in competition with those of this new friend."

" Ellinor," said Catherine, " are you so unkind ?"

" Unkind, indeed! I fancy you would have thought me more unkind, had I not asked you to stay; but really there is no pleasing some people.—But pray," she muttered, as she left the room, " don't stay to

oblige me. I would not for worlds keep you a moment from this very dear friend of yours."

Catherine having replied to her friend's note, and dispatched it, ran up stairs to put on her walking dress; and, on her return to the drawing-room, she found her ladyship and Mrs Lennox.

" Where are you going, Catherine?" said the former.

" To town," she replied.

" You surely don't mean to walk to Edinburgh? you will be too late to dress for dinner."

" Oh, my dear aunt," said Catherine, " I hope you will be kind enough to carry my apology; for Ellen Sefton has just arrived, and I have promised to spend the day with her."

" It looks very like rain," said Mrs Lennox, who had a malicious pleasure in mortifying Catherine.

" Rain!" said Charles, who just then entered, " 'tis the finest day I ever saw."

"Only think, Charles," said her ladyship, "Catherine is going to walk to Edinburgh to see an old friend."

"And why should she not?" said Charles. "But is there any necessity that she should walk? Can't she have the carriage?"

"No, no," replied Catherine; "I assure you I prefer walking."

"Come, then," said Charles, putting her arm within his, "I shall see you so far on your way."

"Take care," said Mrs Lennox, "that you are home in time to dress for dinner." To which admonition Charles made no reply, but, in a kind and affectionate manner, put Catherine's arm within his, and escorted her almost as far as Edinburgh.

The meeting between Catherine and Mrs Sefton was affectionate in the extreme.

"Do you know, my dear Catherine," said the latter, "I sent Sefton out, on purpose that we might have an hour or two to ourselves."

"How well you look, and how happy," said Catherine, pressing Mrs Sefton's hand.

"And to whom do I owe it all, but to you, dear Catherine! Your wise advice prevented a very foolish step. Had I listened to Sefton, I might this day have been an outcast from my father's love. But Harry was in a sad rage with you!"

"I hope he has forgiven me," said Catherine, laughing.

"Oh, yes; now that he has come to his senses, he allows you all due praise for the part you acted, and is quite impatient to be presented to you. He is the very best husband in the world; but do, now, tell me all about your own matters. How have you been going on at your uncle's?"

"Oh, very well; they are as kind to me as possible."

"I rejoice to hear it," said Mrs Sefton.

But here their tête-à-tête was broken in upon by Sefton, who, gently opening the door, said, in a manly, well-toned voice, "Ellen, may I enter?"

"Have the two hours expired?" said Mrs Sefton, laughing.

"Very nearly," he replied.

"Well, then," continued his lively wife, "we give you leave to enter. Approach, and welcome the dearest friend I have on earth."

Catherine was now introduced to Sefton, who was so frank and good-humoured, that Catherine soon felt herself on intimate terms with him. The time passed so pleasantly, that the evening was far advanced before Catherine remarked it was late, adding, "I must soon leave you. My uncle's carriage is to come for me, when it takes the family home from dinner."

"Surely," said Mrs Sefton, "you will not think of leaving us to-night? We have such charming lodgings here, you had better decide on remaining. Do sit down, and write that I will bring you home to-morrow. I really cannot part with you to-night."

Catherine felt too happy in the society

of her friend, to require much entreaty to comply with this request. So the note was written and dispatched.

"Your uncle resides some miles from Edinburgh?" asked Mrs Sefton.

"Yes," replied Catherine; "but it is merely a temporary residence. Sir Thomas has been ordered the hot-bath, which is the reason that he is not at his country-seat this summer."

"I should like to be near you," said Mrs Sefton. "Do you think we could get a pretty villa in your neighbourhood?"

"I have no doubt of it," replied Catherine; "but what does Captain Sefton think of this plan?"

"Oh," said Mrs Sefton, without giving him time to reply, "he always thinks as I do—Don't you, Harry?"

"A pretty Jerry Sneak you will make me appear to Miss Dundas," said Sefton, smiling; "and just to show your friend that I am master in my own house, I issue

my commands that you broil in town during the dog-days!"

"Don't mind him, Catherine," said his lively wife; "you and I shall set out house-hunting to-morrow morning."

The evening passed delightfully. Never before had Catherine met with society so suited to her taste. Here there were no tempers to be studied, no sharp replies to be turned aside. All was harmony and good-humour; and the trio for the night separated, mutually pleased with each other.

"What do you think of Catherine?" asked Mrs Sefton of her husband, the moment they retired.

"Very so so," he replied, vainly attempting to conceal a smile.

"Ah, you deceiver!" said his wife, "I know, from that curl of your lip, that you admire her extremely."

"Well, my dear Ellen, I think your friend a very charming young woman; and as I don't wonder at your partiality for her,

I give you leave to take a house anywhere you please, so that it be near her."

"This is just like yourself, Harry," said Mrs Sefton, her eyes beaming with pleasure; "I shall indeed be most happy to spend a few months in this pretty country, and in the society of my best friend."

"Your *best* friend?" said Sefton, affecting an air of surprise.

"Well, then," she replied, laughing, "I shall say, my next best."

"Has Catherine not come yet?" said her ladyship, on her return from the party.

"No, my lady," replied Campbell.

"That is surprising," said Charles, "for 'tis very late; but, Campbell, go down and tell George to bring round the carriage again. I shall go up to town for her."

"You shall do no such thing," said Mrs Lennox, in an angry tone. "If Miss Catherine chooses to gad away to town, I don't see why you should run after her."

"I believe," said Charles, making his

wife a profound bow, "that I have arrived at the years of discretion."

"I have my doubts of that," replied Mrs Lennox.

"William," cried Charles, "see if the carriage is round."

"I believe, sir," said William, "that Miss Lennox has got a card from Miss Dundas, as Captain Sefton's servant was here some time since."

"Ellinor!" bawled Charles—"Ellinor, I say."

"What do you want, pray?" said Ellinor, half opening the door of her room. "You know I hate to be bawled to in that way."

"Have you got a card from Catherine?"

"What if I have?" she replied with great coolness.

"Because I am going for her."

"You may save yourself the trouble—she means to remain all night with these Seftons." And with these words she terminated the conference, by retreating into

her apartment and pulling the door after her.

"Catherine has written Ellinor," said Charles, on entering the drawing-room, "that she won't be home till to-morrow."

"It would have been very unlike Catherine," said Sir Thomas, "if she had not let us know her intention. She is a good girl, and has more common sense than most of her sex. Some how or other, I never feel right when she is away."

"She makes excellent tea," said her ladyship.

"And she has the sweetest temper in the world," said Charles, glancing at his wife.

"'Tis a pity," said Mrs Lennox spitefully, "that this paragon is not here to benefit by hearing her own praises."

"She is an exception," said Charles, "to the generality of her sex, for *she* can hear another admired without being envious."

"I suppose, sir," said Mrs Lennox, darting a fiery look at her husband, "that was

levelled at me. Oh, fool that I was to marry!" she exclaimed, bursting into tears.

"You cannot, madam," said Charles, with bitterness, "regret that occurrence more deeply than I do."

"Charles, Charles!" said Sir Thomas, "you forget."

"I only wish I could, sir," was his reply.

Mrs Lennox, who was now in the full flow of a hysteric fit, having been conveyed to her apartment, and consigned to the care of Mrs Jenkinson, began to pour into her friendly ear a torrent of invectives against Charles, Sir Thomas, Lady Lennox, Ellinor, and, though last not least, Catherine, whom she blamed as the sole author of this lamentable affair. Never was woman treated so shamefully by the whole pack as she had been—But what better could be expected from a parcel of Scotch savages?—Jenkinson echoed her words, and by her tender sympathy gradually assuaged the outrageous grief of the amiable sufferer.

"Indeed, ma'am," said the obsequious waiting-maid, "Miss Clara does not agree with Scotland any more than yourself; she has done nothing but mope this live-long day, and cry for aunt Catherine."

"I shall give her a good whipping," said the tender mother, "if I find she continues any such practice. I almost begin to think the little imp loves her better than myself, —her own mother!"

"That's just what I think, ma'am," said Jenkinson; "and Miss Clara will do for Miss Dundas what she will do for none of us."

"'Tis very hard, I think," said Mrs Lennox, "that she not only robs me of my husband's regard, but must deprive me of the affections of my child!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Skill'd in no other arts was she,
But dressing, patching, repartee,
And just as humour rose or fell,
By turns a slattern or a belle.
Could so much beauty condescend
To be a dull domestic friend?

GOLDSMITH.

"Now Catherine," said Mrs Sefton, next morning, "I have ordered the carriages to be at the door by eleven o'clock, and you must tell me where to look for this villa in which we are to spend so many happy days. Recollect, I protest against the village where Sir Thomas is residing, for two reasons; firstly, I wish more quietness than can be enjoyed in a watering-place; second-

ly, I want you to reside a great deal with me, which perhaps could not be so easily managed, if we were living in the same place."

"I am delighted to hear you are determined on the country," replied Catherine, "and I think there will be no difficulty in procuring a pretty villa in the neighbourhood of Duddingstone, where the scenery is really beautiful."

To Duddingstone our friends now drove, and after a little time spent in surveying the different houses which were to let, they engaged a very pretty villa, with tolerably extensive pleasure-grounds, commanding a view of the loch; and after agreeing to take possession the following day, the party took their way to Hope Street.

"There is aunt Catherine!" cried Clara, clapping her little hands, "and a lady and gentleman with her."

"Where are you going, Miss?" said Mrs Lennox, as Clara was running from the room.

"To meet aunt Catherine," Clara replied.

"Come back this moment!" said Mrs Lennox. But, without attending to this command, Clara ran down stairs.

"Dear aunt," said the latter, taking hold of Catherine's hand, "what made you stay away so long? I have wished so often for you."

"Have you been unwell, Clara?" said Catherine, kissing her forehead; "your eyes look swelled—have you been crying?"

"Mamma whipped me very hard this morning," whispered Clara, "but you must not tell her I said so."

"What a sweet little girl that is," said Mrs Sefton; "Clara," she continued, "I have brought back aunt Catherine to you."

"You won't take her away again?" asked Clara, looking anxiously in her face. But Mrs Sefton had no time to answer this interrogation, as they had now reached the drawing-room, where Catherine, with a grace all her own, introduced her friends to her uncle's family.

"Where is Ellinor," she asked, on missing her from the apartment.

"She complained of a head-ach," said her ladyship, "and I rather think has gone to bed."

"I will go and inquire how she is," said Catherine, as she quitted the room.

"My dear Ellinor," said she, gently opening the door, "I am sorry to learn you have got a head-ach this morning."

There was something so kind in Catherine's manner, that even Ellinor felt touched.—"Come," she continued, "and let me introduce you to Captain Sefton and his lady; I am sure you will like them—they have taken a villa at Duddingstone, and we shall have such delightful walks there—do let me persuade you to come down stairs."

"I am such a fright to-day," said Ellinor, rising and surveying herself in a mirror.

"By no means; you are only paler than usual."

Ellinor, who was tolerably tired of mo-

ping by herself, was not unwilling to join the party in the drawing-room, from which the sullen humour of Mrs Lennox, and the cries of Clara, had driven her. The cousins descended; and Ellinor, having been presented to Catherine's friends, readily entered into conversation with them; and Mrs Sefton, who was seated next Ellinor, politely hoped that she would frequently favour Captain Sefton and herself with her company at Duddingstone. Mrs Lennox heard all this, and was so highly incensed at not being made the principal person in this invitation, that, from being stiff and formal, she became sullen and reserved. After having made a visit of a most unfashionable length, the Seftons departed, much pleased with Catherine's relatives, and not less gratified by the warmth of their reception.

"What a very pretty woman your friend, Mrs Sefton, is," said Charles; "she appears to have a charming flow of spirits."

"She does indeed merit all you say of

her," replied Catherine, evidently pleased by his praise.

"And Captain Sefton," said Ellinor, "is a delightful creature—he has quite put my head-ach to flight!"

"Really, Catherine," said Charles, "you are rich in agreeable friends."

"Oh, I am so glad you like them," she replied; "but," she continued, addressing Ellinor, "have you any objections to a walk on the sands?"

"None whatever," said Ellinor.

"I will join your party," said Charles, "for I have had no walk to-day."

"I hope," said Catherine, turning to Mrs Lennox, "that you will accompany us?"

A sullen "no" was the ungracious reply. Clara no sooner heard this proposal, than running to the nursery for her pelisse and bonnet, she stationed herself at the front door to await the arrival of Catherine.

"Are you there, Clara, my dear?" said Catherine—"whom are you going out with?"

"With you, aunt, if you will take me."

"Certainly, my dear, you may go if you wish it," she replied.

Mrs Lennox no sooner missed Clara from the room, than she went to inquire what had become of her.

"Where is Clara?" she asked at the nursery-maid.

"I believe, ma'am, she has gone out with Miss Dundas, for her bonnet is not herc."

"And how dare you presume to let her go out without my knowledge? I order you to go and bring her home immediately—the sands are wet, and she will catch cold."

The nursery-maid, who was trimming a new bonnet for herself, and had no inclination to leave her employment, allowed so much time to elapse before she thought proper to follow them, that when she reached the sands, the quartett were fairly out of sight; and having satisfied her conscience by glancing east and west, she returned to Mrs Lennox with the intelligence, that Miss Clara was nowhere to be seen.

As soon as the party returned from their walk, Mrs Lennox, in an imperious tone, ordered Clara to come to her; but the child, afraid of a second whipping, clung to Catherine.

"Go," said the latter, "like a good child, to your mamma, when she calls you."

"How dare you go out, Miss, without my permission?" said Mrs Lennox, giving Clara a slap on the face, which set her a-crying.

"Anne," said Charles, "how can you be so cruel to your own child? She did not know there was any harm in going out."

"But she did," replied his amiable wife, "and it is for disobedience that I punish her."

"Poor Clara," said Ellinor, looking contemptuously at her sister-in-law, "stands a great chance of having her spirits and temper ruined."

"I suppose," said Mrs Lennox, "I can manage my own child without your interference—Come along, Miss," she added,

seizing Clara's arm as she quitted the room to convey her to the nursery, "and never again presume to go out without my leave!"

Clara made no resistance; a most unusual thing with her, and the family saw no more of her that day.

"What a shame," said Ellinor, as soon as the cousins were alone, "in Mrs Lennox to treat Clara in this manner; indulging her one moment, and whipping her the next; she will absolutely ruin the child—I am surprised that Charles does not interfere."

"Indeed," said Catherine, "most of the errors of both sexes arise from a neglected education. I am certain had Mrs Lennox the most distant idea of the consequences of her present mode of conduct, she would soon adopt a very different system with our little friend."

"Were I Charles," said Ellinor, "I should certainly give her some advice on the subject; but indeed she seems to mind

him so little, I hardly know if that would do any good."

The conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of the subject of it, who, having seen Clara safe in the custody of her nursery-maid, returned to the drawing-room, in a worse humour, if that were possible, than when she left it; and it was a great relief to all parties, when this amiable lady drew on her gloves, snatched up her parasol, and sallied out to enjoy the sullen pleasures of a solitary walk.

CHAPTER XX.

Peace sit on thy young spirit:—Never rest
On thee the phantom Sorrow: may thy brow
Pass—like an ark—along life's stormy waste,
As stainless and as beautiful as now.

T. K. Hervey

"Miss Dundas, ma'am," said the housemaid, one morning to Catherine—"I am thinking, ma'am, that Miss Clara is not well; her maid says she hardly tasted anything yesterday, and she has taken no breakfast to-day."

On hearing this, Catherine put down her book, and went to inquire for her little favourite. Clara, who was still in bed, on hearing the door open, thinking it was her mother who entered, immediately closed her eyes, and pretended to be in a most profound slumber.

"Is Clara asleep?" said Catherine, softly.

"Is that you, aunt?" said Clara, joyfully, on hearing Catherine's voice, "I thought it was mamma."

"What is the matter with you, Clara?" said Catherine, feeling her arm.

"I want to die, and go to that good place you used to tell me about. I hope that mamma won't come there, but just you, and Major Willoughby, and papa."

"You had better rise," said Catherine, "and come down to the drawing-room with me."

"No, no, I don't want to go there."

"Come," said Catherine, lifting her in her arms, "I shall be your nursery-maid and dress you, and then you shall go with me to my room, and I shall tell you such a pretty story, and we shall be so happy together."

Clara agreed to all this; and Catherine had just commenced the favourite story of Joseph and his brethren, when Ellinor en-

tered to ask Catherine to take a walk with her.

"Do you want to go out, aunt?" said Clara, looking up in her face; "because I will go back to my own little bed now."

"You are a good child," said Catherine, kissing her; "but I dare say aunt Ellinor will walk alone to-day, and let me stay with you."

"Will you let aunt stay?" said Clara, with a beseeching look.

Ellinor could not resist this appeal, and she good-humouredly said, she would go out alone.

After Catherine had gone through all her stock of stories, Clara said she was tired and sleepy; and the former carried her back to the nursery, and put her in bed, where she found heaped up all the little presents she had given her, while those presented by her mother were shoved into a corner of the room. Mrs Lennox having missed Clara from the drawing-room all the morning, now entered to inquire what had become of her.

"How is this!" she exclaimed. "Clara in bed?"

"She is not very well, ma'am," said her maid.

"Why did you not tell me this sooner?" asked Mrs Lennox.

"I desired Jenkinson to inform you, ma'am, long ago, but I suppose she forgot."

"Clara, love," said Mrs Lennox, approaching the bed, and trying to rouse her; but Clara would not answer. At last, teased by her importunities, Clara pushed her aside, saying, "Go away, I don't want to rise; I am going to die, and aunt Catherine is to take me to Heaven."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Mrs Lennox, "my poor child is really ill. Why do you stand staring there?" she said, addressing Clara's maid, "run this moment for Mr Lennox.

"Oh, Charles," she exclaimed, "my little girl is very ill, send immediately for the doctor."

"Clara, my dear," said Charles, "tell

mamma what is the matter with you. What would you like to have?"

"Aunt Catherine," said Clara; "she promised to take me to Heaven."

"Do, my dear Catherine," said Mrs Lennox, "try and find out what is the matter with her."

"I rather think," Catherine replied, "that there is a slight degree of fever in her pulse; but," she added, on observing that Mrs Lennox's endless questions only fretted the child, "if you will go down stairs, I shall be her sick nurse till we hear what the doctor says."

"What!" said Mrs Lennox, not pleased at this proposal, "am I not more interested in my own child than you can be?"

"I have not the smallest doubt of that," replied Catherine; "but Clara seems inclined to sleep, and, at all events, she should be kept very quiet."

"You had better go," said Charles, who saw that Catherine wished her absence, "and leave Clara to Catherine's care."

" 'Tis very hard, I think," muttered Mrs Lennox, as she quitted the apartment, " to be turned away from the sick bed of my own child. What should she know about managing children? I have a good mind to go back again."

" Clara," said Catherine, " do you know I am to dine with you?"

" Oh, how nice!" said Clara, recovering the use of her speech. " Susan!" she exclaimed, addressing her maid, " aunt is going to dine with me in my own nursery."

While Catherine was still sitting by the bed-side of the little invalid, the doctor was announced, who, on hearing the symptoms, soon discovered that her indisposition arose from something which pressed on her mind. He made particular inquiries if she had any companions, and if she were naturally of a cheerful disposition.

" Very cheerful, sir," said Susan. " She used to be full of play, till within these few days; but now she does nothing but mope, and sit on her little bed with all

those play-things beside her. She cares for no one but Miss Dundas ; and her mamma whipped her the other day for saying she loved her better than her."

"Come, my little girl," said the doctor, "and tell me who gave you all these pretty play-things."

"Aunt Catherine," she replied.

"And see, Miss Clara," said Susan, "here is the wax doll your mamma gave you."

"I don't want it," said Clara ; "I hate it—'tis an ugly thing." And she pushed it from her.

"I hope," said Catherine, "there is nothing materially wrong with my little friend here ?"

"With care and attention," he replied, "I think we shall soon restore her to her usual health ; but her constitution is by no means robust, and I find she has strong feelings, which have been checked, and thrown back upon her. She must be treated with great tenderness. I would recom-

mend her being amused, and kept a good deal in the open air. If a companion of her own age could be procured, it would be all in her favour. Would you like a little girl to play with you?" asked the doctor.

"No," said Clara, "I want no little girl, only aunt Catherine; she promised to play with me after dinner."

"You see, doctor," said Catherine, smiling, "that I mean to return to my youthful sports again."

"You could not do better," he replied, as he went to have a conference with Mrs Lennox.

The doctor, who was a man of some penetration, soon saw how matters stood; and spoke so seriously of the absolute necessity for allowing Clara, in the meantime, to follow the bent of her own inclinations, that Mrs Lennox, alarmed for the health of her child, and conscious that this illness was in part her own work, readily acquiesced in all he said, and promised to follow his directions. He then took his leave, saying

he would see his little patient in the course of the following morning.

The event justified the doctor's predictions. Clara, allowed to do as she liked, and no longer punished for her attachment to Catherine, whose constant shadow she had now become, soon regained her vivacity; and as Mrs Lennox had not yet recovered from the fright she had received, she allowed them to enjoy the society of each other without any further molestation. How long this condescension continued, is yet to be seen; but Clara, with all the thoughtlessness of her age, enjoyed the present hour, without troubling herself as to the evils the future might contain.

CHAPTER XXI.

When all within is peace,
  How Nature seems to smile,
Delights that never cease,
  The live-long day beguile.
From morn to dewy eve,
  With open hand she showers
Fresh blessings to deceive,
  And soothe the silent hours.

COWPER.

As soon as the Seftons were settled in their new abode, Catherine readily accepted a most pressing invitation from her friend to visit them. But what was to be done with Clara, who, the moment she understood that Catherine was going from home, cried incessantly, and entreated to be allowed to accompany her. Catherine, who could not prevail on herself to leave her

little friend behind, wrote a note to Mrs Sefton, asking permission to bring Clara along with her, and received in reply an earnest request to do so. The day after Catherine and Clara's arrival at Duddingstone, Captain Sefton said, " I believe, Ellen, I forgot to tell you that I expect an old friend to dinner to-day. I see him riding up the avenue."

" You sad creature—" said Mrs Sefton. But without waiting to hear her, he ran out to meet his friend.—" I wonder," continued she, " who it can be. I did not know he had any friends in Scotland."

" Aunt Catherine," cried Clara, who was standing at the window, " there is Major Willoughby coming." And before Catherine could recover from her surprise at this intelligence, the gentlemen entered.

" Ellen," said Sefton, approaching with Willoughby, " this is my oldest and best friend, Major Willoughby."

Mrs Sefton received him, as every good

wife should receive the friend of her husband; and Sefton was just about to present him to Catherine, when he was saved that trouble by Willoughby bowing to her, and inquiring for her friends in Hope Street.

Willoughby, much pleased with Mrs Sefton, now made himself so agreeable to her, and conversed so pleasantly, that, before they had been a few hours together, they felt perfectly well acquainted with each other; while Mrs Sefton, who was naturally of a very lively disposition, on this occasion was so anxious to acquire the good opinion of her husband's friend, that Willoughby almost envied Sefton the possession of such a delightful little wife. As all were inclined to please, and, what is still more uncommon, to be pleased, there was no want of amusement; and the evening passed so rapidly away, that they were astonished when the servant made his appearance with the supper tray; and, after a slight repast, the Major having taken

his departure, the family adjourned to their respective apartments. Thus passed the second day of Catherine's sojourn with the Seftons.

"Ellen," said Sefton to his wife, when they had retired to their apartment, "do you know I am half in love with your Catherine Dundas?—It is well for you," he continued, laughing, "that you were Mrs Sefton before you introduced me to this charming girl; had I not been fairly noosed, there is no saying what might have happened."

"Such consummate vanity!" said his wife. "And do you really think that Catherine would have liked you?—I fancy you think," she added, smiling, "that because I was so foolish as to listen to you, you have only to ask to be accepted?"

"You took a pretty long time," he replied, tenderly regarding her, "to make up your mind, whether you would or would not; and did I bear malice, so far from loving this Miss Catherine, I should abso-

lutely hate her for persuading you to delay my happiness so long."

"Do you recollect, Harry," said his lady, laughing, "what a glorious rage you were in after reading her letter?"

"Do I recollect? to be sure I do. And had your pretty friend but come across me at that moment, I verily believe I should have tossed her out of the window."

"Ah, Harry! But now that you have come to your senses, you can't but approve of the advice she gave your giddy wife upon that occasion, who, but for her, might have allowed a very foolish young gentleman to persuade her to commit a more than foolish ation."

"Ellen, you were right, after all, in following your friend's advice; for though I was outrageous at the time, I now rejoice that you did not let my headstrong passion hurry you into a private marriage; and our patience has met its reward. I only wish that all married people may be so happy as we are."

"And I suppose," said Mrs Sefton laughing, "like the fox who lost his tail, you would have all your friends to marry, to keep you in countenance? But, seriously, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see Catherine the wife of Major Willoughby. They seem so well suited to each other, their pursuits and sentiments so similar, that, next to ourselves, they would be the happiest couple in the world."

"Well, then," said Sefton, gaily, "let us lay our heads together and marry them. Only throw them in the way of each other, and the battle is half won. Opportunity is everything in these matters, and I shall take care of the gentleman, while you manage the lady. I don't think that Willoughby will throw any obstacles in the way, for his admiration is evident to the most casual observer; though I am not quite so sure of the lady."

"There's one thing, Harry, I must caution you to avoid, which is, giving Catherine reason to believe that we purposely

throw her in Willoughby's way. Should she suspect us, I am sure, from that moment, her visits here would be like those of angels, 'few and far between.'"

"I shall take care of that; and you may be assured she shall not discover, either from my looks or manner, that such a plot is in agitation against her. But do you think she has any regard for him?"

"Why, I can hardly say, as I have had little opportunity of judging of her sentiments. Catherine is so reserved on those subjects, there's no screwing anything out of her, and she thinks it a deadly sin to boast of her conquests. I at one time thought there was a penchant between her and Mr Lennox; but I must have been mistaken, for I understand she refused him. I can't say I think much of the wife he has chosen."

"Well, but we must arrange how this business is to be conducted. We have abundance of beautiful walks; and you know we can propose that she should show us all

the fine views in the neighbourhood, and when once we get them fairly out, you can feel fatigued; and of course, like a loving husband, I must come home with you."

"And do you really think, Harry, that I shall consent to be cooped up with you in such beautiful weather? I suppose I must just be sick or well as it suits your purpose?"

"I hope," said Sefton, "that she will make some stay with us. Surely the Lennoxes won't claim her soon. I shall ride over to the Barracks to-morrow, and bring Willoughby back with me."

"I am quite sure, Harry," said the wife, "that you will let him discover our scheme."

Early the following morning, Sefton ordered his horse, and proceeded to the Barracks. He found Willoughby at home, and alone, who accepted his invitation with evident pleasure; and ordering his steed, accompanied his friend to the Cottage.

'There's my uncle's carriage," said Ca-

therine, as she was standing at the window, soon after their arrival.

"Run, then, Harry," said Mrs Sefton, "and hand the ladies out."

Sefton soon returned, accompanied by Mrs Lennox and Ellinor.

"How do you do?" said Mrs Sefton, as they entered; "I am happy to see you at the Cottage."

"What a sweet spot you have got," said Mrs Lennox, going towards the window; "and what a pretty walk that is to the left."

"We are very comfortable," said Mrs Sefton, "but, Miss Lennox," she continued, addressing Ellinor, "when we have the pleasure of a longer visit from you, we must take you through all our walks. I dare say your cousin could escort you through them blindfold, particularly her favourite lime-walk; whenever I miss her, I am sure of finding her there."

"It is only of late, I think," said Ellinor, astonished that Willoughby should

have discovered her cousin in this retreat, " that Miss Dundas has become so partial to rural walks and a rural life. I never heard she had any great love for them till now."

" Oh, I beg your pardon," said Mrs Sefton, who soon discovered her motive for this ill-natured remark, " ever since I knew Catherine—and our acquaintance is not of yesterday—she was partial to rural walks. Is it not so?" she continued, addressing Catherine. " You know I used to say, you would be quite thrown away upon any one but a farmer; you positively must marry a squire who raises his own crops, and kills his own mutton."

" Really," said Catherine, laughing, " I am much indebted to you for your good opinion of my taste."

" Good heavens!" exclaimed Mrs Lennox, " I would not marry an odious farmer, no, not for the world!"

" I suppose," said Sefton, " you don't relish the idea of killing your own mutton?

But," he continued, addressing Ellinor, "what say *you* to a squire? I think you would make a very pretty Lady Bountiful."

"Oh, no," she replied, in rather better humour at this compliment, "no country bumpkin for me; and as I don't pretend to be sentimental"—here she glanced at Catherine—"I candidly confess the country has no charms for me; I have a soul above feeding chickens, and stuffing turkeys."

"But," said Sefton, "as I suppose you have not the same objection to eating them, I shall pull the bell and order luncheon—You will require a glass or two of wine to enable you to get to the end of your cousin's favourite lime-walk."

The luncheon having been ordered and partaken of, Mrs Sefton invited them to visit the garden; and this proposal having been acceded to, the party set out. When they reached the door, Ellinor, in the hope that he would offer her his arm, kept close to Willoughby; but Sefton, who saw the

manœuvre, and determined to defeat it, coming up to Ellinor, exclaimed, "I am resolved that no one shall point out to you all the beauties of our little retreat but myself. So, Willoughby," he continued, "you may take charge of Miss Dundas, for I intend to be Miss Lennox's cicerone;" and offering her his arm, which she was forced to accept, they followed the two matrons.

Sefton having marched off with Ellinor, Willoughby fell to the lot of Catherine, an arrangement which did not seem to displease either party.

"Do you know," said Clara, addressing Willoughby, "that I am not going home with mamma, but am to stay here with my own aunt Catherine? Would you like if she was your aunt?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Willoughby; "no, no, Clara, I won't have Miss Dundas for my aunt."

"Well, if you won't have aunt Catherine for your aunt," said Clara, "me won't love you. I wish," she added, taking hold

of Catherine's hand, "you were my mamma?"

"Clara," said Catherine, colouring, "you are a bad child if you don't love your own mamma; and if you say so again, you shall no longer be my little girl."

"But me will try and love mamma, if you will let me be your own little girl again," said Clara, grasping the hand she held.

"Be a good child, then," said Catherine, as they entered the garden.

"Is this not a pretty spot?" added she, leaving Willoughby, and going up to Mrs Lennox; "I do love those old-fashioned gardens. I think, Ellen," she continued, addressing Mrs Sefton, "we must get Captain Sefton to make a rustic seat on that beautiful rising ground. I really think this will supplant the lime-walk in my affections; I shall spend most of my mornings here."

"An excellent proposal," said Mrs Sefton; "it will serve to keep these idlers out

of mischief; we shall set both Sefton and the Major to work to-morrow."

"The Major!" said Mrs Lennox, in some surprise—"is Major Willoughby staying here at present?"

"He is not only," said Mrs Sefton, "staying here at present, but I hope will be much with us while we remain in his neighbourhood. He is a most agreeable inmate, and I shall give him no peace till he promises to make the Cottage his head-quarters."

"Ah," said Mrs Lennox, giving her head a toss, and looking at Catherine, "the riddle is read that makes Miss Dundas so partial to Duddingstone."

"I am really very much obliged to you," said Mrs Sefton, making her a mock curtsey, "for your compliment; but, as I think more of my own attractions than you seem inclined to do, I flatter myself I have some share in the visits of Miss Dundas to the Cottage.—Sefton," continued his lady, "do

come here, and bring the Major with you, till I point out your work to-morrow."

"Upon my word, Ellen," said Sefton, as he and Willoughby approached, "you speak to your lord and master in a most commanding tone."

"So much the better," said Mrs Sefton; "you men never behave half so well as when under petticoat government; but," she continued, "Miss Dundas has given it as her opinion, that you and the Major cannot employ your time to more advantage, than in constructing a rustic seat, to be placed on the summit of that little rising, where we intend to sit with our work; and should you conduct yourselves to our satisfaction, we may perhaps permit you to have the supreme felicity of sitting at our feet; but as we ladies like things done rapidly, you must begin immediately to collect materials."

"What condescending creatures," said Sefton, laughing, "to permit us to sit at the feet of two such divinities!"

"Is Major Willoughby staying here?" asked Ellinor, in great displeasure.

"He has that supreme felicity," replied Sefton, with mock gravity.

"Does he make a long stay?" she rejoined.

"Not above a month or two," said Sefton, carelessly; "but he shan't get away if I can keep him; in fact, we cannot do without him."

Ellinor's jealousy increased tenfold on hearing this unwelcome intelligence. Judging of Catherine by herself, she never doubted but that she would give Willoughby every encouragement; and from their being thrown so constantly together, it would, she thought, be little less than a miracle if he were not caught. Her mortification at the bare idea of Catherine being one day Mrs Willoughby, put her in such bad humour, and rendered her so disagreeable, that Sefton was rejoiced at hearing Mrs Lennox express a wish to return home; and soon

after the carriage was ordered, and the two pouting ladies were driven from the door.

"Mamma's away! mamma's away!" shouted the overjoyed Clara, jumping through the room, and clapping her hands in ecstasy; "mamma and aunt Ellinor are away, and nobody with me, but my own dear, dear aunt Catherine.—Will mamma and aunt Ellinor ever come back?" she anxiously inquired at Sefton, who was much amused at the joy she expressed at the departure of the ladies.

"If you wish them to come back, I am sure they will return," he replied, laughing. "Shall I open the window and call them?"

"No, no!" exclaimed Clara, terrified at this proposal; "I don't want them to come back; me not want you to let mamma and aunt Ellinor ever come here any more."

"What is that I hear you say, Clara?" said Catherine, gravely.

Clara was silent, but, a few minutes after, seating herself on Willoughby's knee, she

whispered, "Aunt Catherine is angry with me for not loving my mamma; but me can't love her—Do you love her?"

"But you know," said Willoughby, without replying to her question, "that you should do what your aunt desires you."

"Well, but," said Clara, "me can't help not loving mamma. You can't love people that whip you, and are so cross; now I love aunt Catherine, for she is never cross, and never whips me; but aunt Ellinor is bad, bad, and if I love mamma, because aunt Catherine bids me, I won't love aunt Ellinor."

"I think," whispered Mrs Sefton to Catherine, "Mrs and Miss Lennox don't stand very high in Clara's good graces. She is really a fine child."

"She is so, indeed," said Catherine; "but I don't think it proper to encourage her to speak in that way of her mother."

"You are perfectly right to check it," said Mrs Sefton; "though, between our-

selves, I am very much of Clara's opinion in regard to your cousins."

"No doubt they have their faults," replied Catherine; "but they have also their good properties.—And you know, Ellen," she added, smiling, "you are very apt to condemn or approve at first sight. As yet you have seen too little of my cousins, to be able to form a correct estimate of their characters."

"The little I have seen of them," said Mrs Sefton, laughing, "does not make me anxious to see more; but stop—yes, there is one I should like to see a great deal more of, and that is Mr Lennox."

"Ah," exclaimed Catherine, pleased at hearing Charles praised, "I was sure you would like him; he was always a great favourite of mine."

"Who is this that is such a favourite of yours, Miss Dundas?" said Sefton, looking up from his book; while Willoughby, who had not heard Charles's name, was listening with such breathless attention to her

reply, as totally to forget to answer the hundred and one questions with which Clara was teasing him.

"What is that to you?" replied his lady; "'tis a pretty thing, indeed, that Catherine and I cannot have a quiet chat in a corner without being cross-questioned in this manner. Catherine, don't you satisfy his curiosity."

"I must confess," he replied, "I have some desire to know who the happy man is who stands so high in the opinion of your friend, whose animated expression, when praising him, first drew my attention to your tête-à-tête."

"We beg, then," said Mrs Sefton, "that you will now favour us, by withdrawing your attention from us, for we don't intend to tell you anything about the matter."

While this was going on, Willoughby, who was much vexed at not hearing who the person was that Catherine admired so much, hardly conscious of what he was do-

ing, very deliberately put Clara down off his knee.

"Why you not let me sit on your knee?" said Clara, in some surprise at finding herself on her feet; "are you angry, too, with me, for not loving my mamma?"

"I thought," said Willoughby in confusion, which did not escape the notice of the Seftons, "that you wished to be down."

"But me not want down," said Clara; "take me up again."

"Come to me, Clara," said Catherine; "I am afraid you are troublesome to Major Willoughby."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs Sefton, looking at her watch, "if it is not half-past four, and we are still in our morning dresses. 'Tis time, Catherine, you were off to your toilette, for we keep country hours here: Sefton gets quite outrageous if the dinner is not on the table to a moment; so if you don't wish a scold, you had better make haste."

"You will make your friend think me a

perfect savage, Ellen," said Sefton, as the ladies were quitting the room.

"I dare say," replied his wife gaily, "she thinks better of you than you deserve."

"What a happy fellow you are, Sefton," said Willoughby with a sigh, "in having such a wife. I almost begin to envy you."

"It would be a much wiser thing," said Sefton laughing, "if you followed my lead."

"Were I but sure," replied Willoughby with a smile, "of being equally fortunate, I don't know but that I might be tempted to take your advice."

"Much as I think of my own little wife," said Sefton, "I still believe there are *some*," he laid a particular emphasis upon the concluding monosyllable, "nay, many women in the world, just as amiable, and who would suit you much better; but," he added with an arch smile, which brought the colour into Willoughby's face, "I must leave you to discover them, if you have not done so already. And now we must follow the example of the ladies, and adjourn to

our toilettes, else Ellen will turn the tables against us."

"Pray, who is late now?" said Mrs Sefton, as the gentlemen entered the drawing-room long beyond the dinner hour. "Catherine and I have been sitting here in state by ourselves for more than an hour, while you two were staring your mirrors out of countenance—Are you not ashamed of yourselves?—But do your duty, Sefton, and lead Miss Dundas down stairs."

Nothing particular passed during dinner, and after sitting a moderate time at table, the ladies adjourned to the drawing-room; and Mrs Sefton, anxious to learn Catherine's opinion of her husband, went direct to the point, by saying, "Come, now, do tell me how you like Sefton—is he not a delightful creature? He admires you exceedingly; but don't think I say this to extort your praises, though I must confess it does look a little like bribery."

"I assure you I don't require to be flattered into approving of your choice; I am

quite charmed with his open and candid character, and then his good-humour is so unfailing, and his laugh so joyous—I do love to hear him laugh, particularly when it is not at my expense."

"I am so happy you like him," replied the gratified wife; "indeed, it would have half broken my heart if you had not; he is the best husband in the world. Now don't smile, and fancy I will change my tone by and by; for when a husband and wife continue to be pleased with each other after the lapse of a year, they have a good right to believe that their happiness rests on a solid foundation. But, as I live, there they come already!—Pray, my good friends, what brings you up stairs so soon? Catherine and I had made ourselves sure of another hour of agreeable chit-chat."

"I think, Willoughby," said Sefton, "since our attentions have met with such a cool reception, we had better return whence we came?"

"You may do as you wish," replied

Willoughby, seating himself beside Catherine, "but I am too much pleased with my present situation to resign it."

Mrs Sefton now seated herself at the piano-forte, and Sefton insisted on accompanying her on the flute, and turning his back on the lovers, he blew away like a hero. Mrs Sefton at last seeing him quite exhausted, insisted on attacking him at chess, and begged Catherine to take her place at the instrument, who, quite unconscious of the plot, continued to converse and play alternately; and the evening passed so pleasantly away, no one was aware of the rapid flight of time: great therefore was Catherine's surprise on reaching her apartment, to find the hand of her watch pointing to the late, or rather early hour of one o'clock.

CHAPTER XXII.

Armado. Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit grows melancholy?

Moth. A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

Love's Labour Lost.

"REALLY, ladies," said Captain Sefton, next morning, "you ought to be ashamed of such late hours. We ought to have had breakfast long since.—Miss Dundas, you are in a fair way of losing your character for early rising."

"Nay," replied Catherine, "if you keep such fashionable hours at night, you can scarcely expect us to rise with the lark in the morning."

"Willoughby and I are quite vain of our exploits. Do you know, we were out by the break of day, and the seat is nearly

completed? Do come and look at it.—We shall require your services of interpreter," continued he, addressing Catherine, "for the old gardener speaks the broadest Scotch I ever heard. I cannot comprehend above one word out of ten."

"I am infinitely flattered by the compliment," replied Catherine, with much gravity.

"Nay," said Sefton, "I don't mean to accuse you of talking the Scotch language; but you cannot deny that you understand it?"

"To that, I believe, I must plead guilty: but shall we go now? Here is poor Clara all impatience for a race in the garden."

"Here, my good friend," said Sefton, addressing the old gardener, "we have brought the ladies to admire the rustic seat we have been constructing for them."

"I reckon," replied John, "they'll be your twa marrows; and real bonny they are, and that's a braw lassie wi' them."

"What does he mean by marrows?"

asked Sefton; but Catherine, affecting not to hear him, addressed John, "This seat really does great credit to your taste. The rustic work is very pretty; you must have laboured very hard to get it done so soon."

"It's no sae taiglesome either, when ane sets about it heartily. I was just telling your gudeman there," pointing to Willoughby, "that I made no long ago a whole summer-house o' this kind o' wark; but I dinna think he kent very weel what I was saying. He's a Southron by his tongue; but I'm thinking your leddyship was born on the north side o' the Tweed?"

"You are quite right," replied Catherine, in some confusion, and not daring to lift her eyes, as Willoughby was standing close to her, who, she feared, understood what the old man was saying.

"Weel, now," answered John, leaning on his spade, and putting on a most sagacious air, "you see there's nae cheating a Scotchman. I thought ye hadna the look o' a Southron—no that I hae ought to say

against them—but ye ken folks aye like their ain country best; and it's right it should be sae.—I dare say now," he continued, addressing Willoughby, "you'll no like your leddy's country sae weel as your ain? it canna be expected that ye should."

Willoughby, who, as Catherine surmised, knew enough of the Scotch language to enable him to make out the meaning of John's remarks, glanced towards her, to see how she was taking the affair, and just caught a glimpse of a glowing cheek, when she hastily turned away, on pretence of showing Clara a bird's nest in the hedge. The Seftons, who observed Catherine's confusion, and suspected the occasion of it, were delighted with her evident emotion, which they thought proved that Willoughby was not indifferent to her, and they considerately walked off to another part of the garden, and left the lovers to their own meditations.

It was long since Willoughby had discovered that his happiness depended on a

union with Catherine; but as it is a characteristic of true passion to exalt the object of it, he scarcely dared to hope that he had made an interest in her heart. At times, he flattered himself that he was not indifferent to her—he had seen with transport the pleasure she seemed to take in conversing with him, and he observed with delight that her favourite line of reading seemed to be works on military affairs, and that her eyes sparkled on hearing any trait related which raised the character of the British soldier. But these bright hopes were sometimes obscured, and he would fear that even her cheerfulness betokened an untouched heart. But that, again, might be occasioned by her being ignorant that her happiness was in the keeping of another. Agitated thus by contending hopes and fears, Willoughby, afraid by precipitance to ruin his cause, refrained from declaring that devoted attachment, which he felt would make or mar the happiness of his life.

"My dear Ellen," said Catherine, "I have just received a note from Lady Lennox, and she seems so anxious for my return home, that, much as I regret to leave you, I fear I must go to-morrow."

"I do not know," answered Mrs Sefton, "how I can prevail on myself to part with you. What will Sefton say? and what will Willoughby do? Only think, Harry," she continued, as Sefton joined them, "Catherine leaves us to-morrow, and I am ready to die of grief."

"Indeed," replied Sefton, "I fear this elopement will be attended with very disastrous consequences. If you persist in such cruelty, you must not be surprised if you hear of a certain person being found drowned in the loch, or dangling on one of your favourite lime-trees."

"I trust, good people," said Catherine, blushing, and attempting to laugh, "that you will all be enabled to moderate your transports, and that the serious consequences you apprehend may be averted." And

snatching up her work, she hastily quitted the room.

"What the deuce can Willoughby be about?" said Sefton; "I thought he would have declared himself long ago. Their courtship seems likely to last as long as the Loves of Hilpa and Shilpa. I must think of some plan to bring this affair to an end."

"I entreat, Harry, you will not interfere; I am sure Catherine would never forgive you. I like Willoughby all the better for his diffidence; he knows a woman such as Catherine Dundas will not be easily won. I am not so sure of her sentiments as to advise him to try his fate at present."

"For all that," replied Sefton, "I am very much inclined to have the matter settled one way or another before she leaves us."

The entrance of Willoughby and Clara interrupted their tête-à-tête.

"I wish, Willoughby," exclaimed Sefton, "that you would help me to bring my wife's good-humour back again."

"It is not often that Mrs Sefton's spirits are discomposed—pray, may I ask what has happened?"

"Enough, in all conscience," replied Mrs Sefton; "Miss Dundas leaves us to-morrow, and I am in very bad humour at being obliged to part with her."

"I am grieved,—I mean surprised, to find we are to lose the pleasure of Miss Dundas's society," replied Willoughby, who, by way of hiding his confusion and concern, pretended to be engrossed by Clara's prattle. "I wish," said he, "that you would come and live with me, and be my little girl; I would buy you a beautiful hobbyhorse, and you would have such delightful rides on it!"

"But I can't," said Clara, "for I am aunt Catherine's little girl, unless you let aunt come too—Will you let her come and live with you?"

"I am afraid," said Willoughby, "that aunt Catherine would rather go back to Hope Street."

"No, no," exclaimed Clara, "she does not like to go back to Hope Street; and I do not like to go to mamma, for she whips me, and aunt Ellinor scolds me. Aunt Catherine never scolds me; but when she is angry with me, she says, 'You shall no longer be my little girl;' and then I kiss my hand, and promise to be a very good child, and then she is friends with me; but if aunt Catherine comes to stay with you, will you let me have the hobbyhorse?"

"Assuredly," he replied.

No sooner had Catherine entered the room, than Clara ran up to her, saying, "Aunt Catherine, we are not going to ugly Hope Street."

"Where are we going then?" said Catherine, smiling.

"Major Willoughby wants you and me to go and stay with him;—will you go, aunt?—Do go, aunt, for Major Willoughby can't buy the hobbyhorse till you and me go to stay with him."

"You know, my dear," said Catherine, "that mamma expects us home in a day or

two; you would not like to leave your own mamma?"

"But I would, though," cried Clara; "I only want to stay with you and——"

"Clara," said Catherine firmly, "if you are not quiet this moment, I shall send you from the room."

Clara, knowing that Catherine never threatened what she did not mean to perform, teased her no more, but left her, and returned to the Major, while Catherine took out her work.

"Take me up," said Clara; "I don't think," she continued, putting her little rosy mouth close to his ear—"I don't think aunt Catherine likes to come and stay with you."

"That is just what I am afraid of," said Willoughby in a whisper, but which, however, reached the ear of Catherine; who, hardly conscious of what she was about, appeared so ill at ease, that Mrs Sefton proposed a short walk, and, accompanied by Catherine, strolled out on the lawn.

"Your friend Clara," said Mrs Sefton, "played you a pretty trick just now; I assure you, you blushed most becomingly, and I expected nothing less than that the Major would instantly have seconded the proposal."

"I never in my life felt so awkward," said Catherine; "and I know she won't let the subject rest, so I must fall on some plan to keep her quiet;—but here she comes."

Clara entered.

"Clara," Catherine began, "you must promise me not to tease Major Willoughby any more about the hobbyhorse, and if you are a good girl, when we go home I shall buy you a new book, or a pretty doll, or anything you like best."

"Can't you buy me a hobbyhorse?" said Clara, looking up in her face.

"No, my dear, a hobbyhorse is only for boys."

Clara gave a sigh at finding she must relinquish this much-coveted plaything.

"Are you angry with me, aunt?" said Clara.

"Not now, my dear," replied Catherine, kissing her forehead.

"And am I your own little girl again?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, then, I will never, never tell Major Willoughby about the hobbyhorse any more."

This promise in some degree relieved Catherine's fears, and by the time the gentlemen joined them, she had resumed her usual composure.

The evening passed away heavily; every one appeared too much engrossed with their own private reflections, to think of contributing to the general amusement; and, for the first time, this little knot of friends rejoiced when the hour of separation arrived.

A thousand times did Willoughby execrate his folly in delaying to ascertain his fate, and fervently did he wish for morning, in the hope that Catherine might take her usual walk before breakfast; but "mortal man is doom'd to sorrow." Catherine did not walk, nor was she left a moment alone

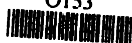
during the few hours she yet remained; and, with a most dolorous air, Willoughby handed her into the carriage, watched it out of sight, and then returned to the Barracks, fully convinced of the dangers of delay, and the evils of procrastination.

Nothing could exceed the cordiality with which Sir Thomas and Lady Lennox welcomed Catherine on her return. Lady Lennox had been quite in despair, for want of some one to add up her accounts—Sir Thomas missed sadly his antagonist at backgammon—and Charles, disgusted with a wife who was always silly, and often peevish, rejoiced at length to have recovered a rational companion. Even Mrs Lennox relaxed somewhat of the usual frigidity of her manner, as she also had missed that forbearing mildness which smoothed down asperities, and restored the harmony, too often broken by the jarring tempers of the family. Ellinor alone gave Catherine a cold reception; and what coquette is there who will not pardon and sympathise with

Ellinor? Spencer was on the reserve—Willoughby had called only once during Catherine's absence—Brooke was off to England, and Ashley was—only a cornet. Suffering under such accumulated injuries, and attributing the desertion of Willoughby to the arts of her cousin, can we wonder that she received her with a coldness which sensibly wounded Catherine, who, more than ever alive to the discomforts of her present abode, sighed for the peace and tranquillity of the loved Villa at Duddingstone.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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